

THE
Ramayana
OF
Valmeeki
RENDERED INTO ENGLISH
WITH EXHAUSTIVE NOTES

BY
C. R. Sreenivasa Ayyangar, B.A.,
LECTURER
S. P. G. COLLEGE, TRICHINOPOLY.

Balakanda and Notes.

MADRAS:

M. E. PRESS, A. L. V. PRESS AND GUARDIAN PRESS.

1910.

Copyright Registered.]

[*All Rights Reserved*

PREFACE

The Ramayana of Valmeeki is a most unique work.

The Aryans are the oldest race on earth and the most advanced ; and the Ramayana is their first and grandest epic.

The Eddas of Scandinavia, the Niebelungen Lied of Germany, the Iliad of Homer, the Enead of Virgil, the Inferno, the Purgatorio, and the Paradiso of Dante, the Paradise Lost of Milton, the Lusiad of Camœns, the Shah Nama of Firdausi are Epics—and *no more* ; the Ramayana of Valmeeki is an Epic—and *much more*.

If any work can claim to be the Bible of the Hindus, it is the Ramayana of Valmeeki.

Professor MacDonell, the latest writer on Samskritha Literature, says :—

“ The Epic contains the following verse foretelling its everlasting fame :—

*As long as mountain ranges stand
And rivers flow upon the earth,
So long will this Ramayana
Survive upon the lips of men.*

This prophecy has been perhaps even more abundantly fulfilled than the well-known prediction of Horace. No product of Sanskrit Literature has enjoyed a greater popularity in India down to the present day than the *Ramayana*. Its story furnishes the subject of many other Sanskrit poems as well as plays and still delights, from the lips of reciters, the hearts of the myriads of the Indian people, as at the

great annual Rama-festival held at Benares. It has been translated into many Indian vernaculars. Above all, it inspired the greatest poet of medieval Hindustan, Tulasi Das, to compose in Hindi his version of the epic entitled *Ram Charit Manas*, which, with its ideal standard of virtue and purity, is a kind of Bible to a hundred millions of the people of Northern India."—*Sanskrit Literature*, p. 317. So much for the *version*.

It is a fact within the personal observation of the elders of our country, that witnesses swear upon a copy of the *Ramayana* in the law-courts. Any one called upon to pay an unjust debt contents himself with saying, "I will place the money upon the *Ramayana*; let him take it if he dares." In private life, the expression, "I swear by the *Ramayana*," is an inviolable oath. I know instances where sums of money were lent upon no other security than a palm leaf manuscript of the *Ramayana*—too precious a Talisman to lose. When a man yearns for a son to continue his line on earth and raise him to the Mansions of the Blessed, the Elders advise him to read the *Ramayana* or hear it recited, —or at least the *Sundarakanda*. When a man has some great issue at stake that will either mend or mar his life, he reads the *Sundarakanda* or hears it expounded. When a man is very ill, past medical help, the old people about him say with one voice, "Read the *Sundarakanda* in the house and Maruthi will bring him back to life and health." When an evil spirit troubles sore a man or a woman, the grey-beards wag their wise heads and oracularly exclaim, "Ah! the *Sundarakanda* never fails." When any one desires to know the result of a contemplated project, he desires a child to open a page of the *Sundarakanda* and decides by the nature of the subject dealt with therein. (Here is a case in point. A year or two ago, I was asked by a young man to advise him whether he should marry or lead a life

of single blessedness. I promised to give him an answer a day or two later. When I was alone, I took up my Ramayana and asked my child to open it. And lo ! the first line that met my eye was:

*Kumbhakarna-siro bhathi
Kundala-lamkritam mahath.*

“The severed head of Kumbhakarna shone high and huge in the heavens, its splendour heightened by the ear-rings he wore.”

I had not the heart to communicate the result to the poor man. His people had made everything ready for his marriage. I could plainly see that his inclinations too lay that way. I could urge nothing against it—his health was good, and his worldly position and prospects high and bright. Ah me ! I was myself half-sceptical. So, quite against my better self, I managed to avoid giving him an answer. And he, taking my silence for consent, got himself married. Alas ! *within a year* his place in his house was vacant ; his short meteoric life was over ; his health shattered, his public life a failure, his mind darkened and gloomy by the vision of his future, Death was a welcome deliverer to him ; and an old mother and a child-wife are left to mourn his untimely end.

The Karma-kanda of the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Smrithis, the Mahabharatha, the Puranas, nay, no other work in the vast range of Samskritha literature is regarded by the Hindus in the same light as the Ramayana. The Karma-kanda is accessible only to a very few, an infinitesimal minority of the Brahmanas—the Purohiths who are making a living out of it ; and they too know not its meaning, but recite it parrot-like. The Upanishads are not for the men of the world ; they are for hard-headed logicians or calm-minded philosophers. The Smrithis are

but Rules of daily life. The Bharatha is not a very auspicious work ; no devout Hindu would allow it to be read in his house, for it brings on strife, dissensions and misfortune ; the temple of the Gods, the Mathas of Sanyasins, the river-ghauts, and the rest-houses for the travellers are chosen for the purpose. The Bhagavad-geetha enjoys a unique unpopularity ; for, he who reads or studies it is weaned away from wife and child, house and home, friends and kin, wealth and power and seeks the Path of Renunciation. The Puranas are but world-records, religious histories.

But, for a work that gives a man everything he holds dear and valuable in this world and leads him to the Feet of the Almighty Father, give me the Ramayana of Valmeeki.

The Lord of Mercy has come down among men time and oft ; and the Puranas contain incidental records of it short or long. But, the Ramayana of Valmeeki is the *only biography* we have of the Supreme One.

“ Nothing that relates to any of the actors in that great world-drama shall escape thy all-seeing eye—Rama, Lakshmana, Seetha, men and monkeys, gods and Rakshasas, their acts, their words, nay, their very thoughts, known or secret. Nothing that comes out of your mouth, consciously or otherwise, shall prove other than true.” Such was the power of clear vision and clear speech conferred on the poet by the Demiurge, the Ancient of Days.

“ What nobler subject for your poem than Sree Rama-chandra, the Divine Hero, the soul of righteousness, the perfect embodiment of all that is good and great and the Director of men’s thoughts, words and deeds in the light of their Karma ? ” And this Ideal Man is the *Hero* of the **Epic**.

“ The cloud-capped mountains, the swift-coursing rivers and all created things shall pass a way and be as

nought. But, your noble song shall outlive them and never fade from the hearts of men." This is the boon of immortality the *poem* shall enjoy.

"And as long as the record of Rama's life holds sway over the hearts of men, so long shall you sit by me in my highest heaven." This is the eternity of fame that comes to *the singer* as his guerdon.

The Hero, the Epic, and the Poet are the most perfect any one can conceive.

It was composed when the Hero was yet upon earth, when his deeds and fame were fresh in the hearts of men. It was sung before himself. "And the poem they recite, how wonderful in its suggestiveness ! Listen we to it"—such was *his* estimate of the lay.

It was not written, but sung to sweet music. Who were they that conveyed the message to the hearts of men ? The *very sons* of the Divine Hero. "Mark you the radiant glory that plays around them ? Liker gods than men ! Behold these young ascetics, of kingly form and mien. Rare singers are they and of mighty spiritual energy withal"—and this encomium was from him who is Incarnate Wisdom.

What audience did they sing to ? "Large concourses of Brahmanas and warriors, sages and saints Through many a land they travelled and sang to many an audience.

Thus many a time and oft did these boys recite it in crowded halls and broad streets, in sacred groves and sacrificial grounds. And Rama invited to the assembly the *literati*, the theologians, the expounders of sacred histories, grammarians, Brahmanas grown grey in knowledge and experience, phonologists, musical experts, poets, rhetoricians, logicians, ritualists, philosophers, astronomers, astrologers, geographers, linguists, statesmen politicians, professors of music and dancing, painters

sculptors, minstrels, physiognomists, kings, merchants, farmers, saints, sages, hermits, ascetics”

What was the effect produced on the hearers ?

“And such the perfectness of expression and delicacy of execution, that the hearers followed them with their hearts and ears ; and such the marvellous power of their song, that an indescribable sense of bliss gradually stole over them and pervaded their frame and every sense and faculty of theirs—strange, overpowering and almost painful in its intensity.”

What was the critical estimate of the audience ?

“What charming music ! what sweetness and melody of verse ! And then, the vividness of narration ! We seem to live and move among old times and scenes long gone by. .

A rare and noble epic this, the Ramayana of honeyed verses and faultless diction, beautifully adapted to music, vocal or instrumental and charming to hear ; begun and finished according to the best canons of the art, the most exacting critic cannot praise it too highly ; the first of its kind and an unapproachable ideal for all time to come ; the best model for all future poets ; the thrice-distilled Essence of the Holy Scriptures ; the surest giver of health and happiness, length of years and prosperity, to all who read or listen to it. And, proficients as ye are in every style of music, marvellously have ye sung it.”

But what raises Ramayana from the sphere of literary works into “a mighty repository of the priceless wisdom enshrined in the Vedas ?” The sacred monosyllable, the Pranava, is the mystic symbol of the Absolute ; the Gayathri is an exposition of the Pranava ; the Vedas are the paraphrase of the Gayathri ; and the Ramayana is but the amplification of the Vedic mysteries and furnishes the key thereto. Each letter of the Gayathri begins a thousand of its stanzas.

The poem is based upon the hymns of the Rig-veda aught to the author by Narada. For, it is not a record of incidents that occurred during a certain cycle ; it is a symbolical account of cosmic events that come about in every cycle with but slight modifications ; Rama, Seetha, Ravana and the other characters in the Epic are *archetypes and real characters*—a mystery within a mystery. The numerous “Inner Meanings” of the Ramayana (vide *Introduction*) amply bear out the above remarks.

There is not one relation of life, private or public, but is beautifully and perfectly illustrated in the words and deeds of the Ramayana characters (vide *Introduction* : ‘The Aims of Life’).

It is not a poem of any one country or nation ; it is a world-asset ; it must find a place in every country, in every town, in every village and in every house.

The Text

(a). *The Bengal recension.* Charles Albert, late king of Sardinia, helped Gorressio to bring out a splendid edition of it in 1867.

(b). *The Benares recension.* Between 1805—1810, Carey and Marshman, the philanthropic missionaries of Serampore, published the text of the first two kandas and a half. In 1846, Schlegel brought out an edition of the text of the first two kandas. In 1859, the complete text was lithographed at Bombay, and in 1860, a printed edition of the same appeared at Calcutta.

(c). *The South Indian recension:*—While the first two recensions are in Devanagari, this exists in the Grantha characters or in the Telugu. This was unknown to the west and to the other parts of India until 1905, when Mr. T. R. Krishna Charya of Kumbakonam, Madras Presidency,

conferred a great boon upon the literary world by publishing a fine edition of it in Devanagari (1905). The earliest Grantha edition was published in Madras in 1891 by Mr. K. Subramanya Sastry, with the commentaries of Govindaraja, Mahesa-theertha, Ramanuja, Teeka-siromani and Peria-vachchan-Pillai. Mr. Raja Sastry of Madras has almost finished another edition of the same (1907), supplementing the above commentaries with that of Thilaka (till now accessible only in Devanagari). It shows a considerable improvement in the matter of paper, type, printing and get-up. Meanwhile, Mr. Krishnacharya has begun another beautiful edition of his text (1911) with the commentary of Govindaraja and extracts from Thilaka, Theertheeya, Ramanujeeya, Sathyadharma-theertheeya, Thanisloki, Siromani, Vishamapada-vivriti, Kathaka, Munibhavaprakasika etc. It will, when completed, place before the world many a rare and priceless information inaccessible till now.

Commentators

1. *Govindaraja*. He names his work the *Ramayana-Bhooshana* "an ornament to the Ramayana," ; and each kanda furnishes a variety of it —the anklets, the silk-cloth, the girdle, the pearl necklace, the beauty-mark between the eye-brows, the tiara and the crest-gem. He is of the Kausikas and the disciple of Sathakopa. The Lord Venkatesa appeared to him in a dream one night while he lay asleep in front of His shrine on the Serpent Mount and commanded him to write a commentary on the Ramayana ; and in devout obedience to the Divine call, he undertook the task and right manfully has he performed it. It is the most comprehensive, the most scholarly and the most authoritative commentary on the Sacred Epic, albeit his zealous Vaishnavite spirit surges up now and then in a hiatus *Siva* and the *Saivites*. Priceless gems of traditional interest

pretations and oral instructions are embedded in his monumental work.

2. *Mahesa-theertha*. He declares himself to be the pupil of Narayana-theertha and has named his work *Ramayana-thathva-deepika*. "I have but written down the opinions of various great men and have nothing of my own to give, except where I have tried to explain the inner meaning of the remarks made by Viradha, Khara, Vali and Ravana". In fact, he copies out the commentary of Govindaraja bodily. He quotes Teeka-siromani and is criticised by Rama-panditha in his *Thilaka*.

3. *Rama-panditha*. His commentary, the *Ramayana-thilaka*, was the only one accessible to the world (outside of southern India), being printed in Devanagari characters at Calcutta and Bombay. He quotes from and criticises the *Ramayana-thathva-deepika* and the *Kathaka*, but makes no reference to Govindaraja. It may be the that work of the latter, being in the Grantha characters, was not available to him in Northern India; and Theertha might have studied it in the South and written his commentary in the Devanagari. Rama-panditha is a thorough-going, uncompromising Adwaithin, and jeers mercilessly at Theertha's esoteric interpretations. In the Grantha edition of the Ramayana, the Uthtnarakanda is commented upon only by Govindaraja and Theertha ; but, the Devanagari edition with the commentary of Rama-panditha, contains word for word, without a single alteration, the gloss of Mahesatheertha !! I have tried in vain to explain or reconcile this enigma. But, the Adwaithic tenor of the arguments and the frequent criticisms of Kathaka, savor more of Rama-panditha than of Theertha.

4. *Kathaka*. I have not been able to find out the author of the commentary so named, which exists only in the extracts quoted in the *Thilaka*.

5. *Ramanuja.* He confines himself mainly to a discussion of the various readings of the text. What commentary he chances to write now and then, is not very valuable. He is not to be confounded with the famous Founder of the Visishtadwaitha School of Philosophy.

6. *Thanisloki.* Krishna-Samahvaya or as he is more popularly known by his Tamil cognomen, Peria-vachchan Pillay, is the author of it. It is not a regular commentary upon the Ramayana. He selects certain oft-quoted stanzas and writes short essays upon them, which are much admired by the people of the South, and form the cram-book of the professional expounder of the Ramayana. It is written in Manipravala—a curious combination of Samskritha and Tamil, with quaint idioms and curious twists of language. Many of the explanations are far-fetched and wire-drawn and reveal a spirit of Vaishnavite sectarianism.

7. *Abhaya-pradana-sara.* Sree Vedantha-desika, the most prominent personage after Sree Ramanuja, is the author of this treatise. It selects the incident of Vibheeshana seeking refuge with Rama (Vibheeshana-saranagathi) as a typical illustration of the key-note of the Ramayana—the doctrine of Surrender to the Lord, and deals with the subject exhaustively. It is written in the Manipravala, as most of his Tamil works are.

Translations

Gorresio published an Italian rendering of the work in 1870. It was followed by the French translation of Hippolyte Fauche's. In the year 1846, Schlegel gave to the world a Latin version of the first Kanda and a part of the second. The Serampore Missionaries were the first to give the Ramayana an English garb ; but they proceeded no further than two Kandas and a half. Mr. Griffith, Principal of the Benares College, was the first to translate the

Ramayana into English verse (1870—74). But, the latest translation of Valmeeki's immortal epic into English prose is that of Manmathanath Dutt, M. A., Calcutta (1894).

"Then why go over the same ground and inflict upon the public another translation of the Ramayana in English prose?"

1. Mr. Dutt has translated but the text of Valmeeki and that almost too literally ; he has not placed before the readers the priceless gems of information contained in the commentaries.

2. The text that, I think, he has used is the one published with the commentary of Rama-panditha, which differs widely from the South Indian Grantha text in readings and in the number of stanzas and chapters.

3. More often than once, his rendering is completely wide of the mark. (It is neither useful nor graceful to make a list of all such instances. A careful comparison of his rendering with mine is all I request of any impartial scholar of Samskritha).

4. I venture to think that his translation conveys not to a Westerner the beauty, the spirit, the swing, the force and the grandeur of the original.

5. Even supposing that it is a faultless rendering of a faultless text, it is not all that is required.

6. As is explained in the Introduction, the greatness of the Ramayana lies in its profound suggestiveness ; and no literal word-for-word rendering will do the barest justice to it.

7. Many incidents, customs, manners, usages and traditions of the time of Rama are hinted at or left to be inferred, being within the knowledge of the persons to whom the poem was sung ; but to the modern world they are a sealed book.

8. Even such of the above as have lived down to our times are so utterly changed, altered, modified and over-laid by the accretions of ages as to be almost unrecognisable.

9. The same incident is variously related in various places.

Every one of the eighteen Puranas, as also the Mahabharatha, the Adhyathma Ramayana and the Ananda Ramayana, relates the coming down of the Lord as Sree Rama, but with great divergences of detail ; while the Padmapurana narrates the life and doings of Sree Rama in a former Kalpa, which differs very much in the main from the Ramayana of Valmeeki. The Adbhutha Ramayana and the Vasishtha Ramayana deal at great length with certain incidents in the life of Rama as are not touched upon by Valmeeki ; while the Ananda Ramayana devotes eight Kandas to the history of Rama after he was crowned at Ayodhya. Innumerable poems and plays founded upon Valmeeki's epic modify its incidents greatly, but base themselves on some Purana or other authoritative work.

10. Many a story that we have heard from the lips of our elders when we lay around roaring fires during long wintry nights and which we have come to regard as part and parcel of the life and doings of Rama, finds no place in Valmeeki's poem.

11. The poem was to be recited, not read, and to an ever-changing audience. Only twenty chapters were allowed to be sung a day, neither more nor less. Hence the innumerable repetitions, recapitulations and other literary rapids through which it is not very easy to steer our frail translation craft. The whole range of Samskritha literature, religious and secular, has to be laid under contribution to bring home to the minds of the readers a fair and adequate idea of the message that was conveyed to humanity by Valmeeki.

12. A bare translation of the text of the Ramayana is thus of no use—nay, more mischievous than useful, in that it gives an incomplete and in many places a distorted

view of the subject. It is to the commentaries that we have to turn for explanation, interpretation, amplification, reconciliation and rounding off. And of these, the most important, that of Govindaraja, is practically inaccessible except to the Tamil-speaking races of India. The saints of the Dravida country, the Alwars from Sree Sathakopa downwards, have taken up the study of the Ramayana of Valmeeki as a special branch of the Vedantha and have left behind them a large literature on the subject, original and explanatory. The Divya-prabandhas and their numerous commentaries are all in the quaint archaic Tamil style known as Manipravala, and are entirely unknown to the non-Tamil-speaking world. With those teachers the Ramayana was not an ordinary epic, not even an Ithihasa. It was something higher, grander and more sacred. It was an Upadesa-Grantha—a *Book of Initiation*; and no true Vaishnava may read it unless he has been initiated by his Guru into its mysteries. It is to him what the Bible was to the Catholic world of the Medieval Ages ; only the Initiated, the clergy as it were, could read and expound it. Over and above all this, there are many priceless teachings about the Inner Mysteries of the Ramayana which find no place in written books. They form part of the instructions that the Guru gives to the Disciple by word of mouth.

13. Then again, there is the never-ending discussion about the method of translation to be followed. Max-Muller, the Grand Old Man of the Orientalist School opines thus :—“ When I was enabled to collate copies which came from the south of India, the opinion which I have often expressed of the great value of Southern MSS. received fresh confirmation. The study of Grantha and other southern MSS. will inaugurate, I believe, a new period in the critical treatment of Sanskrit texts. The rule which I have followed myself, and which I have asked my fellow-translators

to follow, has been adhered to in this new volume also, *viz.* whenever a choice has to be made between what is not quite faithful and what is not quite English, to surrender, without hesitation, the idiom rather than the accuracy of the translation. I know that all true scholars have approved of this, and if some of our critics have been offended by certain unidiomatic expressions occurring in our translations, all I can say is, that we shall always be most grateful if they would suggest translations which are not only faithful, but also idiomatic. For the purpose we have in view, a rugged but faithful translation seems to us more useful than a smooth but misleading one.

However, we have laid ourselves open to another kind of censure also, namely, of having occasionally not been literal enough. It is impossible to argue these questions in general, but every translator knows that in many cases a literal translation may convey an entirely wrong meaning."—Introduction to his Translation of the Upanishads. Part II, p. 13.

"It is difficult to explain to those who have not themselves worked at the Veda, how it is that, though we may understand almost every word, yet we find it so difficult to lay hold of a whole chain of connected thought and to discover expressions that will not throw a wrong shade on the original features of the ancient words of the Veda. We have, on the one hand, to avoid giving to our translations too modern a character or paraphrasing instead of translating; while on the other, we cannot retain expressions which, if literally rendered in English or any modern tongue, would have an air of quaintness or absurdity totally foreign to the intention of the ancient poets.

While in my translation of the Veda in the remarks that I have to make in the course of my commentary, I shall frequently differ from other scholars, who have done

their best and who have done what they have done in a truly scholarlike, that is in a humble spirit, it would be unpleasant, even were it possible within the limits assigned, to criticise every opinion that has been put forward on the meaning of certain words or on the construction of certain verses of the Veda. I prefer as much as possible to vindicate my own translation, instead of examining the translations of other scholars, whether Indian or European."— From the Preface to his translation of the Rig-veda Samhitha.

In his letter to me of the 26th of January 1892, referring to my proposal to translate the Markandeya Purana as one of the Sacred Books of the East, he writes :—

"I shall place your letter before the Chancellor and Delegates of the Press, and I hope they may accept your proposal. If you would send me a specimen of your translation, clearly written, I shall be glad to examine it, and compare it with the text in the *Bibliotheca Indica*. I have a MSS. of the Markandeya-purana. Possibly the palm leaf MSS. in Grantha letters would supply you with a better text than that printed in the *Bibliotheca Indica*."

But, Mrs. Besant, in her Introduction to 'The Laws of Manu, in the Light of Theosophy. By Bhagavan Das, M. A.,' takes a different view :—

"One explanatory statement should be made as to the method of conveying to the modern reader the thought of the ancient writer. The European Orientalist, with admirable scrupulosity and tireless patience, works away laboriously with dictionary and grammar to give an "accurate and scholarly translation" of the foreign language which he is striving to interpret. What else can he do? But the result, as compared with the Original, is like the dead pressed 'specimen' of the botanist beside the breathing living flower of the garden. Even I, with my poor knowledge of Samskrit, know the joy of contacting the pulsing

virile scriptures in their own tongue, and the inexpressible dulness and dreariness of their scholarly renderings into English. But our lecturer is a Hindu, who from childhood upwards has lived in the atmosphere of the elder days ; he heard the old stories before he could read, sung by grand-mother, aunt, and pandit ; when he is tired now, he finds his recreation in chanting over the well-loved stanzas of an Ancient Purana, crooning them softly as a lullaby to a wearied mind ; to him the ‘well-constructed language’ (Samskrit) is the mother-tongue, not a foreign language ; he knows its shades of meaning, its wide connotations, its traditional glosses clustering round words and sentences, its content as drawn out by great commentators. Hence, when he wishes to share its treasures with those whose birthright they are not, he pours out these meanings in their richness of content, gives them as they speak to the heart of the Hindu, not to the brain of the European. His close and accurate knowledge of Samskrit would make it child’s play for him to give “an accurate and scholarly translation” of every quotation; he has preferred to give the living flowers rather the dried specimens. Orientalists, in the pride of their mastery of ‘dead’ language, will very likely scoff at the rendering of one to whom it is a living and familiar tongue, who has not mastered Samskrit as a man, but has lived in it from an infant. For these, the originals are given. But for those who want to touch the throbbing body—rather than learn the names of the bones of the skeleton—of India’s Ancient wisdom, for those these free and full renderings are given. And I believe that they will be welcomed and enjoyed.”

The best test of a translation is that it must not at all appear to be a translation. Some hold that a translation must be a guide to the text, a ‘crib’ as it were, and should enable any one ignorant of the original language

to master it easily and sooner. I believe that a translation is meant to convey to a foreigner the thoughts, the ideas and the *heart* of the writer ; it is not to be a dictionary and grammar combined. A faithful translation and a literal are contradictory terms ; no word-for-word, wooden rendering can be any other thing than faithless ; and no good translation can be literal. No two races think alike; the same thought, the same fact requires to be clothed in different words, in different expressions to reach the mind of the hearer. A translation should be faithful not to the words, not to the constructions, not to the grammar of the original, so much as to the *Kavi-hridaya*, 'the heart of the poet.' Curious notions of literary accuracy have rendered the translations of the Orientalists perfectly useless. Useless to those ignorant of Samskritha, in that it places before them strange thoughts and foreign modes of life and speech in an English garb, but not as they speak it, not as they understand it ; useless to the people to whose literature they belong, in that the translators are foreigners.

They have no sympathy with the writer, or with the subject or with the people whose thoughts they attempt to place before the world. They bring to the work a prejudiced heart, a cold hyper-critical intellect, and an iconoclastic pen. Everything that they cannot understand, everything that they cannot reconcile with their preconceived notions of men and things, of God and the Universe, they throw overboard, without a glance at it, without a pang, just as the grave-digger cast aside the skull of Yorick the jester. They fix the correct readings ; they sit in dread judgment over the commentators who were born in and breathed the very atmosphere of the poet and of his nation ; they give the right meaning of words ; they formulate the canons of interpretation ; they judge of the stage of

progress the people might have attained in the march of material civilisation. They fit every event in the life of a non-christian nation to their Procrustean bed of Biblical chronology ; there was no civilisation superior to *their* own ; there was nothing good or noble, spoken or done, before *their* chosen people, the Lord's Elect, came into the world ; nothing is historical to them except *their* own made-up, lame accounts of the last 2,000 years. That is *their* Time ; that is *their* Eternity. They are very wise men—the Orientalists ; they are psychometrical adepts. Place any thing before them, a rag, a thigh-bone, a tooth, a coin, or a piece of stone and they will spin you an interminable yarn of the man, of the beast or of the people—their history physical, mental, moral, political, literary, economic, industrial, religious—as if they were the very Maker of the objects they operate upon. They would search for history in a Book of Sacrificial hymns like the Rig-veda, in Ritualistic Manuals like the Yajur-veda, in a Book of Psalmody like the Sama-veda, in a book of Rimes and Charms, like the Atharva-veda. They would seek for ‘historic finds’ in moral text-books like the Smrithis, in sacred epics like the Ramayana and the Mahabharatha ; nay, they profess to give you the life and thoughts of a nation from its grammar like the Maha-bhashya, from its philosophical works like the Vedantha literature, from its medical books like Vagbhata, Susrutha and Charaka ; and wonderful to relate ! they find history in treatises upon logic like Tarka-sangraha, in mathematical works like the Leelavathi and the Beejaganitha !! Nothing is too trivial, too humble, too insignificant for them ; their historical appetite is omnivorous.

I would give anything to know what *they* might feel like, if an orthodox Brahmana or a Charvaka Atheist were to

place before the English Christian reading world an English version of the Hebrew Bible ; if he should have the additional advantage of only a nodding acquaintance with the language ; if he should never have set his eye on the people whose revealed Scriptures he professes to further reveal ; if he should never have come across the real Sacred Books of the East ; if he should have come into contact only with the lowest strata of the nation or with unprincipled renegades to the faith of their fathers ; if he should not even dream of access to the higher classes, their homes, their life, their words, their acts, their joys, their sorrows, their virtues, their vices, their faith, and their sceptism ; if he should be imbued with a supremely high notion of his omniscience, of his unerring keenness, of his literary infallibility ; if he should take it for granted that *his* race is the chosen one, that *his* religion is the only true one and that the others are false, that *his* people are destined to march for ever in the forefront of civilisation, prosperity and power. Now what would the orthodox English Christian or the devout Bishops and Archbishops think of such a version of the Holy Bible, embellished to boot, with original commentaries, remarks, reconciliations and judgments *ex-cathedra*, based mostly upon the unhealthy fumes of his imagination and prejudices ? How would the English nation like to have *its* history written, say, 5000 years hence, from stray coins, from mouldering skeletons, from moss-covered pieces of stone and architecture, from its 'Book of Common Prayer,' from its 'Book of Psalmody,' from the 'Paradise Lost' of Milton, from the 'Holy Living' of Taylor, from Abbott's Shakespearian Grammar, from Jevon's Logic, from Masson's British Philosophy, from Barnard Smith's Arithmetic, from Todhunter's Algebra and Geometry, from Webster's Dictionary, from its scientific, medical, industrial, and

mechanical treatises, and the other decaying rubbish of a forgotten nation buried under the mounds of the Past?

That is exactly how the true Arya feels when he reads translations like that of Max-Muller, Griffith and their ilk or original critical estimates like those of Weber & Co., the Orientalist Iconoclasts. Western historians depict in glowing colors and sneering language how Mahommad of Ghazni destroyed the idol of Somanatha ; but Weber & Co. essay to shatter to pieces *the faith of millions*, their guide here and there hope hereafter. *Well, as he soweth so shall he reap.* My opinion of the whole class and of their Indian parasites is the same as what I expressed in the Preface to my "Life and Teachings of Sree Ramanuja;" and I quote it for the benefit of those who have not come across that book.

"What care I about your coins and inscriptions, your pillars, and mounds, the dry bones of History ? To me it is of far more importance how a man lived and worked among his fellows, than when and where he was born and died, where he was at a particular date, when he wrote such and such a book, whether he was tall or short, dark or fair, single or married, a flesh-eater or a vegetarian, a teetotaller or no, what particular dress he affected, and so on. And yet more important still it is to me what a man thought and wrote, than how he lived and died. Your Orientalists ! Heaven save me from the brood. Mischief enough they have done, those human ghouls that haunt the charnel houses of Antiquity, where rot the bones of men and events of the Dead Past. They have played sad havoc with the fair traditions of our forefathers, that placed ideas before facts and theories, and the development of a nation's heart before 'historical finds' or 'valuable discoveries'. Many a young man of promise they have turned away to

paths uncongenial, where his bray betrays the animal within the skin. You will find no such antiquarian twaddle in my book."

Well do they fit in with the lines of Tennyson.

" Those monstrous males that carve the living hound,
And cram him with the fragments of the grave,
Or in the dark dissolving human heart,
And holy secrets of this microcosm,
Dabbling a shameless hand with shameful jest,
Encarnalize their spirits ; " *The Princess*.

Gladly would I exchange shiploads of them for one Sir Edwin Arnold.

One more extract, this time from 'The Zanoni' of Lytton and I have done.

" The conduct of the individual can affect but a small circle beyond himself ; the permanent good or evil that he works to others lies rather in the sentiments he can diffuse. His acts are limited and momentary ; his sentiments may pervade the universe, and inspire generations till the day of doom. All our virtues, all our laws, are drawn from books and maxims, which are sentiments, not from deeds. In conduct, Julian had the virtues of a Christian, and Constantine, the vices of a Pagan. The sentiments of Julian reconverted thousands to Paganism ; those of Constantine helped, under Heaven's will, to bow to Christianity the nations on the earth. In conduct, the humblest fisherman on yonder sea, who believes in the miracles of San Gennaro, may be a better man than Luther. To the sentiments of Luther the mind of Modern Europe is indebted for the noblest revolution it has known. Our opinions, young Englishman, are the angel part of us ; our acts, the earthly". *Book I, Chapter 5.*

Alas ! The History of India by the Reverend Dr. Sinclair, is at present more authoritative in the eyes of the school boys than the Ramayana of Valmeeki or the Puranas of Vyasa. The History of Samskritha Literature by Messrs.

Max Muller, Weber, Monier Williams, MacDonell, etc., is the last word upon the writings of the Aryans, religious or secular. *Translations* are quoted and the *originals* are decried or are unknown. Verily, we are in the Iron Age, in the everdownward cycle of the Kaliyuga.

I hold that any History of India worth reading ought to be written by a true-hearted Hindu; I hold that the sacred books of the Hindus ought to be translated by a Hindu, by a Brahmana; by one that has faith in the virtues and manhood of his people, in the wisdom and philanthropy of his fore-fathers; by one that combines in himself a deep and comprehensive knowledge of the literature and traditions of his country, and of that to which he means to convey his message—but never one of alien faith, nor a follower of Christianity without Christ, nor an apostate seeking to curry favour with the ruling race and the leaders of Western thought. Now, in the case of the Ramayana of Valmeeki, it is all the more imperative that the Translator should possess the additional qualification of a thorough knowledge of the Tamil religious literature of the Dravidian School of Vaishnavism, that he should have been brought up in and saturated with the atmosphere of those amongst whom the Ramayana is recited and listened to with profound faith and devotion and to whom it is not a bare literary work but a living reality, a sacred Book, one that can mould their life here and hereafter.

As to the cobwebs of Western speculation about the historical value of the Ramayana, its date, the contemporary mention of it, the critical biography of the poet, its posteriority or otherwise to the Mahabharatha, its being a Zodiacial allegory or an account of the spread of the conquering Aryans into the South of India, about Rama being the type of the husbandman and Seetha being a symbol of agriculture and such-like. Orientalist twaddle run riot, I have my

own opinion, certainly not creditable to them or to their authors. It is an open secret how History is written. The Boer war is within the memory of most of us; but, I have seen three diametrically different versions of it. The most important elements of a man's life or of a nation's are their thoughts. And History, to deserves its reputation of being "Philosophy teaching by example", should record *them* alone and not dry facts and dates. The history of western nations do not run back, honestly speaking, farther than 2,000 years ; and huge libraries are already filled to overflowing with the records of that small period. The Aryans, who have, as we believe, existed as a separate race on this planet for over 5 millions of years, can but afford to preserve *their highest and most valuable thoughts*. *That forms their History* and is inextricably woven into their religion, morality and philosophy. *That* is "Philosophy teaching by example," and *no other*.

Is the Ramayana historically true ? Is it a record of events that actually took place ? The best answer I could make is in the words of the lecturer on the Bhagavad Geetha, Mrs. Besant. Her remarks apply equally well to the Ramayana or to any other Hindu Purana.

"Now, in the Bhagavad-Geetha there are two quite obvious meanings, distinct and yet closely connected the one with the other, and the method of the connexion it is well to understand. First, the historical. Now, specially in modern days when western thought is so much swaying and coloring the eastern mind, Indians as well as Europeans are apt to shrink from the idea of historical truths being conveyed in much of the sacred literature ; those enormous periods, those long reigns of kings, those huge and bloody battles, surely they are all simple allegory, they are not history. But what is history and what is allegory ? History is the working out of the plan of the *Logos*, His plan, His

scheme for evolving humanity ; and history is also the story of the evolution of a *World Logos*, who will rule over some world-system of the future. That is history, the life-story of an evolving *Logos* in the working out of the plan of the ruling *Logos*. And when we say *allegory*, we only mean a smaller history, a lesser history, the salient points of which, reflexions of the larger history, are repeated in the life-story of each individual Jivatma, each individual embodied spirit. History, seen from the true standpoint, is the plan of the ruling *Logos* for the evolution of a future *Logos*, manifested in all planes and visible on the physical, and therefore full of profoundest interest and full of profoundest meaning. The inner meaning, as it is sometimes called, that which comes home to the hearts of you and me, that which is called the allegory, is the perennial meaning, repeated over and over again in each individual, and is really the same in miniature. In the one, Iswara lives in His world, with the future *Logos* and the world for his body; in the other, He lives in the individual man, with the Jeevatma and its vehicles for His body. But, in both are the one life and the one lord, and he who understands either, understands the twain. None, save the wise, can read the page of history with eyes that see; none, save the wise, can trace in their own unfolding the mighty unfolding of the system in which a future *Logos* Himself is the Jeevatma and that ruling *Logos* is the Supreme Self; and inasmuch as the lesser is the reflection of the greater, inasmuch as the history of the evolving individual is but a poor faint copy of the evolving of the future *Logos*, therefore in the scriptures there is even what we call a double meaning—that history which shows a greater self-evolving, and the inner allegorical meaning that tells of the unfolding of the lesser Selves. We cannot afford to lose either meaning, for something of the richness of the

treasure will thus escape us ; and you must have steadily and clearly in mind that it is no superstition of the ancients, no dream of the forefathers, no fancy of the ignorant generations of far-off antiquity, that saw in the little lives of men reflections of the great Life that has the Universe for its expression. Nor should you wonder, nor be perplexed when you catch, now and again, in that unfolding picture, glimpses of things that, on a smaller scale, are familiar in your own evolving ; and instead of thinking that a myth is a cloudy something which grows out of the history of a far-off individual, exaggerated and enlarged, as is the modern fancy, learn that what *you* call myth is the truth, the reality, the mighty unfolding of the supreme Life which causes the shaping of a Universe ; and that what *you* call history, the story, the story of individuals, is only a poor faint copy of that unfolding. When you see the likeness, learn that it is not the great that is moulded by the small ; it is the minute that is the reflexion of the mighty. And so, in reading the Bhagavad-Geetha, you can take it as history ; and then it is the great Unveiling, that makes you understand the meaning and the purpose of human history, and thus enables you to scan, with eyes that see, the panorama of the great unfolding of events in nation after nation, and in race after race. He who thus reads the Geetha in human history can stand unshaken amid the crash of breaking worlds. And you can also read it for your own individual helping and encouraging and enlightening, as an allegory, the story of the unfolding spirit within yourselves. And I have purposed this morning, to take these two meanings as our special study, and to show how the Geetha as history is the Great Unveiling, the drawing away of the veil that covers the real scheme which history works out on the physical plane ; for it was that which removed the delusion of Arjuna and made him able to do his

duty at Kurukshetra. And then, turning from that vaster plane, to seek its meaning as it touches the individual unfolding of the spirit, we shall see what that has of teaching for us, what that means for us of individual illumination; for just as history is true, so is allegory true. As the history, as we shall see, was the preparation for the India of the present, and the preparation for the India of the future, so also is that true which is elsewhere written in the Mahabharatha : "I am the Teacher and the Mind is my pupil." From that standpoint we shall see Sree Krishna as the Jagath-guru, the world-Guru, and Arjuna as the Mind, the Lower Manas, taught by the Teacher. And thus we may learn to understand its meaning for ourselves in our own little cycle of human growth.

Now, an Avathara is the Iswara, the *Logos* of a world-system, appearing in some physical form at some great crisis of evolution. The Avathara decends—unveils Himself would be a truer phrase; 'decends' is when we think of the Supreme as though far-off, when truly He is the all-pervasive Life in which we live ; to the outer eye only is it a coming down and descending—and such an Avathara is Sree Krishna. He comes as the *Logos* of the system, veiling Himself in human form, so that He may, as man, outwardly shape the course of history with mighty power, as no lesser force might avail to shape it. But the Avathara is also the Iswara of the human Spirit, the *Logos* of the spirit, the Supreme Self, the self of whom the individual spirit is a portion—an amsa. Avathara then is the Iswara of our system; the Avathara also, is the Iswara of the human spirit ; and as we see him in these two presentments, the light shines out and we begin to understand.

Let us take the historical drama, the setting of the great teaching. India had passed through a long cycle of great-

ness, of prosperity. Sree Ramachandra has ruled over the land as the model of the Divine Kingship that guides, shapes, and teaches an infant civilisation. That day had passed. Others had come, feebler to rule and guide, and many a conflict had taken place. The great Kshathriya caste had been cut down almost to the root by the Avathara, Parasu Rama, Rama of the axe; it had again grown up strong and vigorous. Into that India the new manifestation came.

In that part of her story, this first offshoot of the great Aryan Race had settled in the northern parts of India. It had there served as the model, the world-model, for a nation. That was its function. A religion, embracing the heights and depths of human thought, able to reach the ryot in his field, able to teach the philosopher and the metaphysician in his secluded study, a world-embracing religion, had been proclaimed through the lips of the Rishis of this first offshoot of the Race. Not only a religion, but also a polity, an economic and social order, planned by the wisdom of a Manu, ruled at first by that Manu himself. Not only a religion and a polity, but also the shaping of the individual life on the wisest lines—the successive Varnas, the successive Asramas ; the stages of life, in the long life of the individual, were marked in the castes, and each caste-life of the embodied Jeevathma reproduced in its main principles, in the individual life, the Asramas through which a man passed between birth and death. Thus perfectly thought out, thus marvellously planned, this infant civilisation was given to the race as a world-model, to show what might be done where Wisdom ruled and Love inspired.

The word spoken out by that ancient model was the word Dharma—Duty, Fitness, Right Order.—*Hints on the Study of Bhagavad-Geetha*, pp. 6—12.

The Ramayana of Valmeeki "is a romance and it is not a romance. It is a truth for those who can comprehend it, and an extravagance for those who cannot."

Out of the vast mass of events in the history of the world, the Guardians of Humanity select only such as are best suited to their purpose and weave around them narratives that stand as eternal symbols of cosmic processes.

To the man of facts and dates, coins and inscriptions, I would recommend the advice given by Tennyson's Ancient Sage to the rationalistic young man.

"The days and hours are ever glancing by,
And seem to flicker past thro' sun and shade,
Or short, or long, as Pleasure leads, or Pain ;
But with the Nameless is nor Day nor Hour ;
Tho'we, thin minds, who creep from thought to thought,
Break into 'Thens' and 'Whens' the Eternal Now:
This double seeming of the single world !—"

To the sceptic, cased in the impenetrable armour of doubt and disbelief, owning no world outside the perception of his unerring senses, who wants to prove everything by the touchstone of *his* reason before he would deign to allow it a place in his Hall of Knowledge, I say with the Sage that :—

"Thou canst not prove the Nameless, O my son,
Nor canst thou prove the world thou movest in,
Thou canst not prove that thou art body alone,
Nor canst thou prove that thou art spirit alone,
Nor canst thou prove that thou art both in one :
Thou canst not prove thou art immortal, no
Nor yet that thou art mortal—nay, my son,
Thou canst not prove that I, who speak with thee,
Am not thyself in converse with thyself,
For nothing worthy proving can be proven,
Nor yet disproven ; wherefore thou be wise,
Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,
And cling to Faith beyond the forms of Faith !
She reels not in the storm of wav ing words,
She brightens at the clash of 'Yes' and 'No,'
She sees the Best that glimmers thro' the Worst,
She feels the Sun is hid but for a night

She spies the summer thro' the winter bud,
 She tastes the fruit before the blossom falls,
 She hears the lark within the songless egg,
 She finds the fountain where they wail'd 'Mirage' !."

But, to him who would pierce thro' the exoteric narrative down to the bed-rock of Truth, out of which bubbles ever the Waters of Immortality and Omniscience, to him who would feel the heart-throb of Valmeeki, to him who would understand the mystery of the Divine Incarnation and its sublime purpose, I say :—

" If thou wouldest hear the Nameless, and will dive
 Into the Temple-cave of thine own self,
 There brooding by the central altar, thou
 Mayst haply learn the Nameless hath a voice,
 By which thou wilt abide, if thou be wise,
 As if thou knewest, tho' thou canst not know ;
 For Knowledge is the swallow on the lake
 That sees and stirs the surface--shadow there,
 But never yet hath dipt into the abyss,
 The Abyss of all Abysms, beneath, within
 The blue of sky and sea, the green of earth,
 And in the million millionth of a grain
 Which cleft and cleft again for ever more,
 And ever vanishing, never vanishes,
 To me, my son, more mystic than myself,
 Or even than the Nameless is to me.
 And when thou sendest thy free soul thro' heaven,
 Nor understandest bound nor boundlessness,
 Thou seest the Nameless of the hundred names."

For, saith the Lord. "He who thus knoweth my divine birth and action in its essence, having abandoned the body. cometh not into birth again, but cometh unto me, O, Arjuna!"—*Geetha IV, 9.*

I have tried my best to be faithful to the original in word and in sentiment wherever it was possible. I have tried to place before his readers the thought that underlay the words of the poet. I have tried to preserve, as far as I could, the force, the beauty and the spirit of the Ramayana, that it may arouse in the hearts of the readers the same sentiments, passions and feelings that well up in the hearts of a

Hindu audience, when it listens to its recital. I have incorporated into the translation of the text, wherever it was necessary, the explanations and the comments of Govindaraja and the other authoritative commentators ; but, where they differed or supplemented one another, I have given the essence of their opinions in the form of Notes. I have drawn from all available sources of information, the Hindi version of Thulasi Das, the Prakriti of Hemachandracharya, the Vedas, the Smrithis, the Puranas, the Darsanas, in fact, the whole range of Samskritha and other literature, as far as was accessible to me. I know that any one who undertakes the translation into English of such colossal works as the Ramayana or the Mahabharatha must have at his disposal a large and well-represented library; I know also that I have neither the means nor the influence to possess it. But, I take this opportunity to render my heart-felt thanks, full and over-flowing, to all such as have helped me by placing their books at my disposal, more especially to the Brahma Vidya Lodge, T.S. Kumbakonam. I know that this enterprise requires a large initial outlay of capital and that I have it not. Babu Pratap Chandra Roy, the brave translator of the Mahabharatha, appealed and with success to the various Governments of India, Europe, and America ; Mr. Manmath Nath Dutt, the first translator of the Ramayana into English prose, was favoured with the royal support of His Highness the Maha-raja of Travancore, to whom he dedicated his work.

But my mainstay and support is Sree Ramachandra, whose greatness and glory I humbly endeavour to bring home to the hearts of the millions in the East and in the West. To Him I dedicate, in all humility and reverence, my unworthy production—to Him, to Seetha, to Lakshmana, to Bharatha, to Sathrughna and last, not least, to Maruthi, the Ideal Rama-bhaktha. In their never-failing grace do

I place my trust to enable me to carry on this work to its completion.

I know, better than others, the shortcomings of my work and of the numerous disqualifications I labour under to do my duty towards it ; and I humbly crave the indulgence of my readers, their sympathy, their support, their advice and their good thoughts.

C. R. SRINIVASA AIYANGAR, B.A.,
TRICHINOPOLY.

INTRODUCTION

I :—“*The Ramayana.*”

“The record of the life and adventures of Sri Rama.”

This expression is naturally applicable to all works that treat of Sri Rama ; but custom and tradition have limited it to the grand epic of Valmiki.

Words are of three kinds :—*Rudhi*, used in a conventional sense ; *Yaugika*, derivative, retaining that significance which belongs to it by its etymology ; and *Yaugika Rudha*, having both an etymological and special meaning.

Such names as *Krishna* belong to the first class ; *Dasarathi*, the son of Dasaratha, is a type of the second ; *Pankaja*, the lotus, represent the third. The last word, etymologically understood, means “born in the mud ;” but other flowers such as the water-lily are not so called. It is confined by convention to the lotus alone. Even so the expression ‘Ramayana.’ Many have sung ‘the Life of Rama,’ but convention restricts it by pre-eminence to the immortal epic of Valmiki alone. The Gita, the Brahma Sutras, The Maha Bhashya and Rama, are by conventional usage and tradition understood to mean respectively, The Bhagavad Gita, The Brahma Sutras of Vedavyasa, the Maha Bhashya of Patanjali and Rama the son of Dasaratha.

II :—‘*The Original.*’

Brahma, the Ancient of Days, sent down Narada to instruct Valmiki in the mysteries of Divine wisdom. Vedic Hymns was the form in which the teaching was imparted. Later on, the Four-faced One came down even unto where Valmiki abode and endowed him with the Open Eye of the Seer. The sage saw with clear vision into the past, the present, and the future; and the record thereof was given to the world in the form of a grand poem of 100 crores of stanzas—*A. R. Manohara Kanda I*; *A. R. Yatra Kanda I*; *Adb. R., I.*

Brahma sung the life of Rama in a poem of 100 crores of stanzas and taught it to Narada and the other Rishis of this world.—*G. R., Bala Kanda, G. in his preface to his Notes on Bala Kanda*

It contains 9 lakhs of cantos, 900 lakhs of chapters and 100 crores of stanzas—*A. R. Manohara Kanda 17.*

In course of time, the holy sages received the inestimable gift and continued to recite the epic in their hermitages. Countless bands of the Shining Ones gathered overhead in their bright aerial cars and listened entranced to the heart-compelling strains; showers of heavenly flowers rained on the heads of the blessed singers; and shouts of joy and acclamation rent the skies. Then began a mighty struggle among the denizens of the other worlds as to who should have exclusive possession of the sacred epic. The Devas (Angels of Light) would have it in their bright homes on high; the Daityas (the Lords of Darkness) and the Nagas (Dragons of wisdom) would not rest until their nether worlds resounded with the holy chant; but the Sages and Kings of the earth would have parted with their lives sooner. Hot was the discussion between the excited claimants; Brahma the Creator, Siva the Destroyer tried in vain

to arbitrate ; in the end, they and the ambitious aspirants along with them proceeded by common consent to where the Lord Vishnu lay reclined on the folds of the Serpent of Eternity, gently lulled by the throbbing waves of the Ocean of milk. They laid the case before him and besought a way out of the difficulty. Vishnu cut the Gordian knot by dividing the huge work equally and impartially among the three claimants, who, they averred, were all entitled to it.

33 crores, 33 lakhs, 33 thousands, 333 stanzas and 10 letters formed the portion of each. Maha Lakshmi, the Consort of Vishnu, Sesha, the Serpent of Eternity, and Garuda, the divine Bird were initiated by the Lord into the three mighty Mantras (Spells) built up of the last 10 letters above mentioned. Lakshmi shared her knowledge with the Angels on high. Sesha instructed the Dragons and the Asuras in the Nether worlds. From Garuda came the knowledge of the mighty Mantra to the mortals of this Earth. What these mantras are and how they are to be utilised can best be learnt from the Science that treats of them (*The Mantra Sastra*). Thus proceeding, two letters remained undivided and indivisible. Siva requested that they might be his portion. The Holy Name that they expressed, *Rama*, was reverently received by the Lord of the Kailasa ; and for all time he abides at the holy Kasi (Benares), to whisper it into the right ear of those who exchange their mortal tenements for the Robe of Glory ; and it takes them over safely through the tossing waves of material existence on to the shores of the Regions of Light.

Thereafter, the portion of the Earth was further divided among the seven spheres thereof—Pushkara, Saka, Plaksha, Kusa, Krouncha, Salmali and Jambu. Each secured to itself 47,619,047 stanzas ; but 4 remained indivisible. Whereupon, Brahma the Creator begged hard of his father

to be allowed to receive it. Later on, Narada learnt them from him.

"I was before this Universe began and no other. Being and Not-Being are the Kosmic Ultimates ; but beyond them and behind them *I remain*. All else shall pass away and change—all Name and Form ; but, *I remain*. That which presents itself not as Truth, that which manifests itself not as the Self, verily that is Maya, the great Illusion cast upon the Supreme One like a mist, like a pall of darkness. The Great Elements permeate all Name and Form like warp and woof ; but the Manifested and the Unmanifested live in Me and move and have their being. The Supreme is the Life and Light of the Universe ; but for It, it is not. Know thou the above and you know Me". These are the Great Truths.

The inhabitants of the Pushkara Dweepa divided equally their share between the two Varshas (continents) that compose it ; but the nine Varshas of our Jambu Dweepa received 5,291,¹05 stanzas each and a seven-lettered mantra.—Kuru, Hiranmaya, Ramyaka, Ketumala, Ilavrita, Bhadraswa, Hari, Kimpurusha and Bharata. But the letter 'Sri' that remained, was held in common by the nine Varshas.

Later on, the Lord took form as Veda-Vyasa; the Kaliyuga will see the Brahmanas dull of intellect and short-lived; so, he divided the one eternal Veda (Divine Wisdom) into many branches (Sakhas) to suit their varied capacities. Hence his name Veda-Vyasa, 'He that adjusts or arranges the Vedas'. Further, he took what fell to the Bharata Varsha as its share of the Original Ramayana and based upon it the 17 Puranas, the Upapuranas, and the Maha Bharata. But, his soul knew not peace nor serenity. He sat with an aching heart on the banks of the swift-flowing Sarasvati

when Narada came unto him and instructed him in the mysteries of the Self as contained in the four stanzas that constituted the Heart of all Wisdom. Veda-Vyasa assimilated it and embodied it in his famous Sri Bhagavatha, the child of his mature wisdom and fullness of peace.

The great sages, that later on gave to the world the various standard works on the Science of words, Astronomy, Astrology, Phonetics, Prosody, the Rules of Ritual and the Vedic glossaries, drew their materials from the Original Ramayana; and there is not an episode, that embodies any truth, moral, social, religious or philosophical, but owes its origin to the same.—*A. R. Yatra Kanda II.*

The Mahabharata has a similar mystery of its own. Vyasa sung it of yore in 60 lakhs of stanzas, 30 of which the Angels kept to themselves ; the Fathers appropriated 15 ; the Rakshasas and the Yakshas had to content themselves with 14 ; while we on this mortal earth were blessed but with the remaining lakh. Vaisampayana has preserved it for us. 24,000 stanzas make up the work, the numerous episodes excluded. But, there exists a compendium of the same in 150 stanzas and it is called the Anukramanika.

—*M. B., I. 1.*

III.—‘The Singer.’

Maharshi Valmeeki is held to be the composer of the epic. The name means ‘He who sprang out of the ant-hill.’ Said Brahma, the Fashioner of the worlds, ‘Know this mighty sage as Valmeeki, in as much he has come out of the Valmeeka (the ant-hill),’—*Brahma Kaivartha Purana.*

i. “I am the tenth son of Varuna, the Lord of the Waters (or the 10th in descent)”—*V. R. VII. 96,19* ; “Thus was sung the Ramayana by the mighty son of Varuna ; and Brahma signified his glad approval thereof”—*V. R., VII. 10,*

All through the countless years, trees and shrubs sprang around him, while an immense ant-hill arose on all sides, completely concealing him from view. Later on, Varuna, the Lord of the Waters, sent down heavy rains, which dissolved the strange tenement ; coming out of it, the Gods hailed him as the son of Varuna, as Valmeeki.—*Go. on V. R.*—I, 1.

ii. He came of the line of Bhrigu, the son of Varuna. *V. R.*, VII., 94.

Riksha of the line of Bhrigu, was later on known as Valmeeki. He held the office of Veda-Vyasa in the 24th Chatur Yuga—*V. P.* III, 3.

iii. He is the son of Varuna and brother of Bhrigu—*Bh.*, IV. 1.

iv. He is the same as Riksha, the son of Prachetas of the line of Bhrigu—*V. R.* I. 1 (Go.) He abides in the world of Indra. *V. R.* VII. 71—11. ; *M. B.* II. 7.

v. Once upon a time, there lived on the shores of lake Pampa, a Brahmana, Sankha by name. Journeying through the pathless woods that covered the banks of the Godavari, a fierce-eyed hunter sprang at him and was not long in transferring to himself the clothes, the ornaments, the water pot and even the leathern sandals of the unfortunate Brahmana. It was mid-summer and the sun was high in the heavens. His pitiless rays beat down upon the head of poor Sankha ; the red-hot sand burnt his tender feet to the very bone. He folded the rags that the cruel mercies of the hunter leftd him and stood upon them while the forest solitudes resounded with his screams of agony. The iron heart of the hunter grew soft towards him. “ I did right” said he to himself “in depriving the poor fellow of what he had. It is but in the exercise of my duty and hereditary calling; but let me lay

by some small merit by giving him my old sandals." Sankha was profuse in his gratitude. " May all good go with you ! Verily, it is some good karma of a past life that put into your head the idea of making a present of a pair of sandals to a poor wayfarer and that, when he is in most need of it." The hunter was curiously affected with the prophetic words of the Brahmana. " Good sir ! May I know what merit I have laid by in a former birth ? " " Alas ! replied Sankha, " the fierce sun almost melts my poor brains. My tongue cleaves to my mouth from dire thirst. Is this a place to dilate upon old-world stories ? Take me to some cool shady spot where I may rest my poor limbs."

A ray of pity illuminated the dark recesses of the hunter's heart. Gently he led Sankha to the cool waters of a lake hard by; and the Brahmana plunged into its welcome depths, performed his midday prayers, offered due worship to the Gods, the Fathers and the Sages. Meanwhile, the hunter busied himself in providing his late victim with sweet fruits and roots ; Sankha partook of them, and quenched his thirst at the limpid lake ; then sought the leafy shade of a hospitable tree where the hunter followed him. " Now will I reveal unto you some glimpses of your chequered past" said Sankha.

" There lived of old a Brahmana, by name Stambha, of the clan of Sri Vatsa. In Sala town he abode and with him his beautiful wife Kantimayee, a model of wifely virtues and whole-hearted devotion ; but, the wayward heart of the man turned away from her ; and he so forgot himself, his manhood and the duty he owed to a lady and his wife, that he installed in his home a harlot, in whose witching smiles he lived. Outraged in everything that a woman holds dear and sacred, Kantimayee yet remained loyal to her unworthy husband ; she was most assiduous in attending to the comforts of the man and

his paramour ; she anticipated their least wishes, supremely content if she could thereby win back her husband's love.

Years passed away thus ; and the wretch suffered the torments of Hell even before he reached it, in the shape of a cruel disease that made his days and nights one long agony. The woman who owned him body and soul, quietly robbed him of what wealth he had and sought another and more congenial companion of her pleasures. He came to know it and in his bitterness of his heart called down the deadliest curses upon the head of the betrayer and upon himself that so basely abused his wife's loyalty and love: "I stand alone in the world and helpless. I have wilfully destroyed every chance of deserving any help from you or sympathy. My treatment of you was simply abominable. I placed the harlot in the sacred seat of the wedded wife ; I rejoiced to see the pure hands of my life's partner serve all meekly, the unclean animal I had taken to my heart. Cruel were my words to you and crueller my behaviour. The Holy Books tell us, that the husband who wrings the heart of his loyal wife is doomed to the miserable lot of a eunuch for ten lives and seven ; the finger of scorn will ever point at him. Now, the reed on which I lent has broken and pierced my heart." But Kantimayee lifted hands of appeal to him and cried, "Lord of my heart ! Your hand-maiden is ever at your service. She is yours to command—now and ever. You shall not lack for any sympathy or service that my poor self can render. Strange it is that you should feel shame-faced to ask it of me. Never did the slightest shadow of resentment darken my heart against you. As for what you say of my cheerless life, do I not know that I only pay back what I owed in my former birth ? I made my bed and I must lie upon it. And when was a dutiful wife known to be otherwise than loyal and loving to her lord?"

Forthwith she sped to her parents and got from them the wherewithal to provide for his wants and necessities.

One hot day in June, Devala the sage crossed the threshhold of the humble pair and requested hospitality. Kantimayee turned to her husband and said ‘This holy man is a master physician. I am sure that he will relieve you of your cruel disease, if he is so-minded’. Thus she played upon his intense selfishness and unconsciously persuaded him to welcome the sage. She washed his scorched feet with cool water, placed a seat for him, fanned his weary limbs ; and when he had rested a while, entertained him with the very best her humble abode afforded. The water that washed his feet she took to her husband and said “This is a very potent medicine and fails not” ; whereat, he eagerly drained it at a gulp.

At last, the disease ate into his vitals and he became delirious with pain. she procured some medicine and was trying to force it into his mouth, when the man was seized with terrible convulsions and expired biting off finger of poor Kantimayee. She sold her ornaments and jewellery, bought fragrant wood with it, placed her unworthy husband upon it, set fire to the same and lay by his side in sweet content and supreme peace of heart. She took her place in the House of Glory.

But the dominating tendency of his life asserted itself at the last moment and of the harlot was his last thought. The wheel of Karma has turned and he is now a hunter—the natural foe of the birds of the air and the beasts of the forests. You are no other than that renegade Brahmana. Your partner in iniquity is now born among the hunters and is your wife. Since you consented, unconsciously though, to welcome and entertain the Rishi Devala, a ray of pity, a flash of something noble crossed your dark heart and induced you to relieve my

sufferings and make a gift to me of your old shoes. The holy water that washed the feet of the sage has purified your unclean spirit ; and you have been privileged to hear from me the details of your former life. In your last moments you bit off the finger of your faithful wife; now you live upon the flesh of slain beasts. You died in your bed ; and now the hard earth is your only bed. Nay, I will reveal to you what will befall you hereafter.” He opened the eyes of the hunter to his next birth, instructed him in the right way of spending the holy month of Vaisakha. The hunter, now supremely repentant, gave back to his benefactor the articles of which he had dispossessed him and saw him safely out of the dark woods. The unexpected turn thus given to his life was productive of very favourable results.

Krinu, the sage, spent long years of severe austerities on the banks of a beautiful lake. When it was over, his life essence streamed through his eyes ; a serpent swallowed it and the quondam hunter took birth in its womb. A Brahmana by birth, he was brought up by the rude hunters and took to their ways of living. He mated with a woman of the lower classes and had many children through her. He organized a gang of foot-pads, waylaid the travellers and lived upon his ill-gotten gains.

One day, the Seven Sages chanced to pass through the forest. Our Brahmana hunter promptly held them up. “Reverend Sirs! None pass this way without paying me toll. Nay, it is but duty that I owe my wife and my young ones. So I request you to make a transfer of everything valuable you have.” The Holy Ones smiled in pity and said, “My good man, please yourself. But do us a slight favour. Go home and put to your wife and children the following question :—‘ You share with me the gains of my calling, do you not ? Well ; doubtless you will take a share of the retribution natural to such a

life of lawlessness and cruelty as I lead.' Fear not, but we will remain here, even until you come back with their answer ; " and they bound themselves thereto by the most solemn oaths. The hunter could not clearly explain to himself what they were after. But such a simple request did not deserve to be refused. So he went home and put the question to his wife and children. But they laughed in his face and cried, "Are you gone mad? Who can deny that we have a right to a share of your earnings ? But, as to a share of the results of your crimes, why, the very idea is supremely absurd."

The hunter was dazed with surprise at this outburst of frank selfishness. The holy presence of the Sages purified his nature and brought out its nobler instincts. So, back he sped to where his strange visitors were. Tears of repentance and grief streamed down his rugged face as he clasped their feet and exclaimed in despair, " Lords of Compassion ! blind have I been till now ; a life of cruelty and iniquity did I lead, and went back upon the noble traditions of the Brahmanas, to whom I belong by birth. I have run through the entire gamut of crime. And now I take my refuge in your mercy. Extend the shadow of your protection over me." No other helper have I.

Then they took council among themselves. "Our poor friend is a Brahmana ; but he has chosen to degrade himself and lead a hunter's life. Yet, he seeks refuge of us ; and it behoves us to do something for him. Let us try upon him the effect of the all-potent Name of Sri Rama. He can have no better weapon to fight his past evil." They called him unto them and said, "My good man ! We instruct you in the mystery of a very powerful mantra. But, as you have a long course of purification to go through, you cannot receive it as it is; we shall reverse it for you. Meditate upon it with your heart and soul, day and night, till we come back,"

They then whispered into his ears the syllables *Mara* and vanished from his sight.

The hunter planted his staff where they stood a moment ago and sat down there in all earnestness, in all sincerity, to meditate upon the mighty spell. Many thousands of years passed over his head. The world and all it held slipped away from his consciousness. His various bodies were gradually purified of everything gross and material and shone in their splendour and radiance. But there rose around him where he sat, a large ant-hill, that in course of time concealed him from view. The Sages were as good as their word. They came back to where their hunter-disciple sat, lost in profound meditation. "Come out into the living world" called they ; and he came out from the ant-hill. The Sages laid their hands on his head in sweet blessing and said, "Holy One ! The Name of the Lord has consumed your past sins. You have stood face to face with the Great Mystery. You are our equal. A second time were you born when you came out of yonder ant-hill. The world shall know you hence as Valmeeki (Son of the Ant-Hill)."

Thus did Valmeeki narrate the events of his former birth to Him whose life he sung.—*A. R. Rajya Kanda.* 14; *Ad. R. II. 6* ; *Bhav. P. III. 10*.

Bhrigu and Valmeeki were the sons of Charshani and Varuna—*Bh. VI. 10*.

IV.—The Number of Stanzas.

The 7 cantos are divided into 500 chapters and 24,000 stanzas. (*V. R. VII. 94*). Govindaraja's commentary extends only to so many ; But, the actual number is 24,253. The commentator explains it thus :—

1. It is many thousands of years since the poem was sung. Innumerable versions of it would naturally have

arisen ; the carelessness of the later copyists might have also contributed to this irregularity.

2. It may be that Valmeeki set himself to sing the epic in 24,000 stanzas ; but, he was obliged to exceed the limit, more especially as it was sung and not written.

3. We ought to take it that 24,000 is the lowest limit. The work would not fall short of it.

4. The Day of Brahma comprises 1,000 Mahayugas. A Manvantara is 1/14 of it; but Amara Simha, in his Lexicon has it that it comprises 71 Mahayugas, ignoring the fractional portion. Even so, 24 is the nearest total number in thousands, the odd stanzas being ignored. But, as it stands, the South Indian edition in Grantha characters commented upon by Govindaraja contains:

Cantos.	Chapters.	Stanzas.
Balakanda	77	2,255
Ayodhyakanda	119	4,415
Aranyakanda	75	2,732
Kishkindhakanda	67	2,620
Sundarakanda	68	3,006
Yuddhakanda	131	5,990
Uttarakanda	110	3,234
	647	24,253

V.—When was it sung ?

Valmeeki composed this epic before Sri Rama celebrated his horse-sacrifice. Ravana and his brood had been wiped out.—V. R. I. 4.

Satrughna went to Mathura, killed Lavana in fair fight and ruled for over twelve years in his town. Returning to Ayodhya, he spent a night at the hermitage of Valmeeki :

when he heard the grand epic sung by Kusa and Lava.—*V. R.* VII. 71.

“Whom shall I give it to” thought Valmeeki ; and it so chanced that the royal twins Kusa and Lava touched his feet and begged to be taught the sacred song.—*V. R.* I. 4.

So Valmeeki must have composed it when Rama held sway at Ayodhya and had put Sita away from himself.

“When the Tretayuga draws to its close and its successor the Dwapara takes its place, in that Twilight of Ages, I come down on earth as Sri Rama, son to Dasaratha, and lift the load of sin and sorrow from her shoulders.”—*M. B. Santi Parva* III. 39.

VI.—The Epic.

“*This* we should do ; *that* we should not. *This* secures to us happiness here and hereafter ; *that* plunges us in misery now and for ever. *This* is good for us ; *that* is not so.” Now, no one denies that such discriminative knowledge is extremely desirable and useful to all that make the journey of life. The Holy Writ (*Vedas*), the World-histories (*Puranas*), and the sacred Epics (*Kavyas*) give us such knowledge, if we but get at their Heart-Doctrine. Every one of these go to develop in us the same faculty of Right Discrimination ; but, there is a difference in the process.

Now, the Holy Writ is almost kingly in its authority. There is no questioning it, no altering it. It must be taken as it is and must be obeyed to the very letter. You may not take out the word *Agni* in a Mantra and replace it by its synonym, say—*Vanhi*. Why? The results predicated would not come about ; nay, evil, and that of no light kind will come out of it. “If a Mantra be not rendered aright in rhythm, intonation or accent, if the letters are misplaced or omitted, the results fail to appear ; and the fool would

have drawn down death upon himself. Behold ! Thwashta sought to create one who *could slay* Indra. But, a slight change of accent and intonation made it to bring into existence one who *was killed* by Indra."—Sruti. We may not at present understand the results of each and every commandment ; but we dare not disobey them ; for it will bring forth evil. No one sits down to argue the orders of a general on the battle field or of a king on his throne ; he does not analyse it, examine its legality, morality or philosophic fitness. Even so, study the Holy Writ with care ; learn from it what to do and what to avoid. Follow the Right and keep away from the Path of Unrighteousness. But, all this is primarily based on an unreasoned desire for happiness and fear of evil.

Now, the World-histories adopt a milder tone. They command not, but offer friendly advice. "This one did right and lived in happiness here and hereafter. This another chose the path of wickedness and came to grief and misery now and beyond." Thus we are led to conclude that Rama should be our ideal and not Ravana. This is the more pleasant way of learning the Rules of Life.

The Epic deals with the question in a different way. It is not the nature of women to wear their hearts on their lips ; but, none the less, they obtain what they want—and very often more. Even so, the epics carry a meaning on their surface ; but, there runs an under current of deep thought and instruction. Lovers of literature seek to pierce through the veil of words into that which lies beneath—the heart of the poet; and once found, it is a perennial source of joy. Hence, the epic is the best teacher of the three.

A perfect Epic is flawless in every way ; it abounds in all excellences ; it has a beauty all its own. Rightly has it been named "The child of the poet's heart."

There are three varieties of it. The Gadya Kavya (narrative prose) of which Kadambari is the type; the Padya Kavya (narrative poetry), represented by Raghuvamsa ; the Champu (narrative prose and poetry), like the Bhojachampu.

Man has to hand countless materials that go to build up his Palace of Happiness; even so the Epic. The words and their connotations, these form its body ; the Heart Doctrine is its breath of life ; Metaphor, Simile, Hyperbole and the other Figures of Speech serve to adorn it gaily ; puns, innuendos and the other inferred hints make up its list of personal excellences, bravery, fortitude, valour and the like. Vaidarbhi and the other varieties of diction are its generic attributes and ennable it. Kaisiki and the other modes of style are its graceful motions. The harmonious arrangement of words is known as the Sayya, the soft bed on which it reclines at ease. Fire brings out the sweetness of objects and distil for us their essences ; even so the Pakas, the various Modes of composition. These are the ingredients that heighten the beauty of the Epic.

Words fall into three classes :—

Vachaka, Lakshaka and Vyanjaka; likewise their meanings. The Vachya represents the connotation as laid down in authoritative lexicons. The philosophers hold that the primal words were assigned their respective significance by the Divine Being. The Lakshya seeks an allied and derivative signification where the first fails to be appropriate. The Vyāngya comes to light when the words have been arranged in their grammatical order and have expressed their natural meaning ; it is apart from the above and renders it more graceful and charming. Dhvani is another name for it.

There are numerous Figures of Speech, chief amongst which are a hundred. These do not belie the name given them of Alāmkara (ornamentation). From Slesha (the

pun), to Gathi (the way), there are 24 Gunas (attributes) that go to make up the character of the Epic. These are to be found in the arrangement of the words themselves.

Reeti (Diction):—this excellent choice of words is divided into,

Vaidarbhi—difficult word-joinings, harsh letters and long compounds, find no place in it.

Gaudi—long and tedious compounds characterise it and harsh letter.s

Panchali—a happy combination of the above.

Vritti (Style):—the words and the sense aptly render the varying emotions. This is of four kinds.—

Kaisiki—reflecting the higher emotions of Love and Pathos.

Arabhami—painting the Wonderful, the Humourous and the Serene.

Satvati—picturing to us the Heroic and the Dreadful.

Bharati—wherein the Terrible and the Repulsive find a voice,

Sayya:—the words must be so arranged that their relations might not be far-fetched.

Paka:—unripe fruits are wrapped up in straw or otherwise subjected to the influence of heat to make them soft and mellow.

The nobility and grandeur of composition gives a beauty and charm to the emotions of the heart.

Draksha Paka (the Grape) · The grape requires not much effort to make it yield its sweet juice ; so, the piece charms us with its manifold graces even while we read it.

Nalikera Paka (the Cocoanut) : You have to painfully remove its hard rind, break through the shell, get at the nut and even then, you have to chew it soft before you enjoy its refreshing juice. Even so, the Epic does not

easily surrender itself to you in all its beauty, but puts you through the veritable Labours of Hercules before it rewards you.

The *grape* melts in your mouth ; the *cocoanut* is hard to crack. Between these are found the *Madhu* (the Honey) the *Ksheera* (the Milk), the *Kadali* (the Plantain), and the like.

The Epic Inferior has no Dhvani to boast of, but the superficial graces of words and their natural meanings. 'Chitra' is another name for it.

The Epic Middling :—the natural meaning preponderates while the Dhvani peeps in now and then.

The Epic Superior :—the Dhvani is essentially conspicuous and graces the words and their natural significance. Towns, the ocean, mountains, seasons, moonlight, sunrise, pleasant recreations in charming groves, aquatic sports, carousals, love-making, pangs of separation, wedding, birth of a son, councils of state, gambling, military expeditions, battles and the happy times of the hero have each a chapter or more devoted to them. Various feelings and emotions that sway the human heart find perfect expression. The chapters are not long and tedious. The metres used in them are sweet to the ear. Each chapter varies the metre at its close.

This is the Epic Perfect ; and the Ramayana of Valmeeki is its best exponent.

Such a work is a source of joy to us in this world and in the other. "An Epic brings us fame, wealth and worldly wisdom ; it keeps our feet from the Path of Evil ; it needs but be studied to charm ; it ever counsels us aright like a true love."—*Kavya Prakasa*.

"Who will say that the study of noble Epics destroys not the dark brood of sin and evil in us ? Whom does it not

charm ? Whom does it not save from the wiles of wrong?"—*King Bhoja.*

The Maha Kavya, the Grand Epic.

The Hero ennobles the Epic. His very name drives away from us the Things of Darkness, and gathers round us the sweet Angels of good. Such a one must be sung of by it.—*Bhamahacharya.*

"The Mount Meru towers aloft in greatness and grandeur ; but the Tree of Plenty (Kalpaka) makes it more charming and graceful. Figures of Speech, Style, Diction, and Modes do beautify the Epic: But the perfect Hero is its crest-jewel."—*Udbhatacharya.*

"An Epic owes its life and fame to its noble Hero."—*Rudra Bhatta.*

"The Hero's noble attributes hold together the poet's word-gems that shine for all time around the necks of the lovers of literature."—*Sahitya Meemamsa.*

The poet may be modest of speech and his attainments of no very high order ; but his choice of a Hero compels the attention of the most fastidious—*King Bhoja.*

Else, the wise pay no great heed to them.

The Maha Bharata lives for ever in the hearts of men, only because the Lord Sree Krishna forms its central figure and hero.

The Science of Reasoning finds a place in the life of the Great One, since it affords analogical evidence and inference that the Lord is the instrumental and material cause of the universe.

The Science of Ritual is also useful in this way. One should learn the Holy Writ first and then alone proceed to inquire into the nature of the various Rules of Life laid down therein ; so begins the teaching. It sets itself to bring home to our hearts the Divine attributes and excellencies. It is the hand-maiden of the Royal Science of Self,

The Vedanta, the Science of the Absolute, leads us to the feet of the Supreme One by holding up for our veneration and ideal His countless perfections.

Q. The Monists hold that the Absolute has no attributes. How then can the Science deal with the same? How then can Vedanta profess to expound to us the nature and attributes of Brahman?

A. Though some passages deny any attributes to It, we can yet postulate that the absence of imperfection is perfection. Or, we predicate attributes of It in Its conditioned and manifested aspect. Hence, Sciences and World-histories find a place in the estimation of the Wise and attain deathless fame, in so far as they contribute to unfold to human minds the glory of the Great One.

The Ramayana of Valmeeki is the oldest Epic in the world; and it bids fair to rule the hearts of men to the very end of Time.

He who sung it is throned aloft in the Temple of Fame. And why? Sree Rama, the Supreme One, is the Hero of his immortal poem. He is the noblest of the noble. His Name dispels the Things of Gloom and Darkness and Evil. All excellences find their perfect expression in him. "He who hath not drunk of the beauty of Rama's presence, he upon whom the benign glances of Rama have not rested, even for a while, the world throws him out as a thing peculiarly vile; nay, his very self scorns him."—*V. R. II. 17.*

Of a truth, it is but a waste of time and labour to study poems that come not up to the above level.

The Hero

Fame and valour are his; the Aims of Life lie next his heart; round him centre the chief events; in him shine forth all heroic qualities; and he alone enjoys the supreme good that the poem holds out.

The Hero must exemplify in himself the following :—

1. High birth (*V. R.* II. 1).
2. His natural beauty, though unadorned, should captivate the hearts of the beholders, even as though it was adorned to perfection.
3. He must hold his head higher than any other ruler of men and should bow to no other.
4. His munificence and generosity must quite overwhelm those that seek him.
5. The grandeur of his presence must illuminate the world, even like the noon-day sun.
6. A right adaptation of means to ends, a marvellous perception, almost intuitive, of the when, the where, and the how, of human actions.
7. A heart ever wedded to the Great Law (*V.R.II.* 2).
8. Divine origin (*V. R.* II. 1).
9. A perfect knowledge and mastery of all the knowledge of his time (*V. R.* II. 2).
10. Supreme simplicity and unassumingness.

The *Hero* is of four kinds :—

1. *Dhirodatta*. Joy and sorrow, anger and grief have power to move him not. Deep is his heart beyond ken, even when overwhelming emotions would lay bare its profundity. He would not see any one, man or beast, in pain or grief, but would at once devote himself to relieve it. He is remarkable by the almost utter absence of self. He sees through the Eye of Wisdom and listens through the Ear of Experience. The Heroic emotions dominate in him.

- (2) *Dhiroddhata*. Proud and jealous, he is a man of impulses. Of fierce deeds, he boasts of them and of himself, whenever the mood is on him. His knowledge of things enable him to make others see and hear and feel

what he likes. Quick to feel and ready to revenge, the Terrible characterises him.

(3) *Dhira Santa*, Of infinite patience, all griefs touch him and vanish. He has ever a smile and a gentle word for all. The Serene finds its expression in him ; and he is a Brahmana as a rule.

(4) *Dhira Lalita*. He leaves the cares of state and its control to his sons or his ministers. The gentler and finer arts of life occupy his time and attention. A happy life and a quiet is what he aims after. The emotion of Love is the key-stone of his character.

The Rasas (Emotions).

A modification of mental consciousness brought into existence through

(1) *Vibhava*:—Youth, beauty, intelligence, the moon-light, the southern zephyr, the spring, the flowers, the joyous notes of birds and the like (*V. R. IV. 1.*)

(2) *Anubhava*:—The witching glances of women, the play of their eye-brows, and the like.

(3) *Satvika*:—Utter sympathy with others, even to the extent of experiencing in himself their joys and sorrows; and

(4) *Sanchari* :—The minor emotions, 32 in number, from Dispassion to Anxiety.

Nine are the *Rasas*, the flashes that play over the dark waters of the human heart—Love, Humour, Pathos, the Terrible, the Heroic, Fear, the Repulsive, Wonder and Serenity. Man and woman are moved strangely by each other ; and this is known as *Sthayi Bhava*, varying with everyone of the above emotions. But, till it develops into any one of these, the others should not dominate it ; the modifying causes, mentioned above, *Vibhava* and the like, should nourish it and give it an independent existence as a *Rasa*. Man loses himself in the experience of

it. (The above is a very superficial mention of the chief varieties ; but, the reader may profitably consult Dasa Rupaka and other works on Rhetoric).

Love, Valour, the Terrible, the Wonderful and the Serene ought to find a place in any narration of the life of the Hero.

If the above are in any way unsuited to the Hero-type selected ; or if the Hero and the Heroine are wanting in mutual and perfect love ; or if the love of the Heroine stands higher than that of the Hero ; or if animals, birds and savages form the subject of narration or description, it is a Perversion of Emotion.

In the Ramayana, Love and the other Emotions find apt and perfect expression. Rama takes Seeta to wife and lives happily with her in his father's capital for many years. The course of true love runs smooth here. Ravana kidnaps her; and then we have a fine description of the miseries of separated lovers. The episode of Surpanakha is a fine touch of humour. Dasaratha pines away of sorrow, having lost, through his own folly, the son of his heart; Pathos, supreme and touching, characterises the entire scene. Lakshmana's deeds of valour illustrate the Heroic in man. Ravana and his impious brood, with their cruelties, their savage grandeur and their unbounded might, voice forth the Terrible. The incident of Mareecha and his kin is a fine picture of the Fearful. Kabandha, Viradha and their fellow-monsters, appropriate to themselves the Repulsive. Wonderful past belief are the deeds of battle and might of Ravana, Indrajit, Kumbhakarna and the like ; and Sabari, the woman-saint, embodies the Serene in her noble life. But, Love in its myriad aspects dominates the epic throughout ; the other emotions are but auxiliary. Some hold that the epic is titled 'The Fall of Ravana' and that the Heroic is the master-emotion, while the others are but secondary. Others contend

that Valmeeki named his grand-work the *Seetacharitra* and Grief forms the key-note of the whole, while the others are its complements.

The Heroine.

She partakes to a very great extent of the excellent characteristics of the Hero, in so far as they are applicable to women. Her very name must be a Word of Power to keep away evil and attract the Angels of Light. (For a fuller description of the heroine and her innumerable varieties, Dasa Rupaka and other standard works on the Poetics may be consulted).

VI.—*The Aims of Life.*

“An Ithihasa should take as its subject some famous episode of the Past ; it should lead us to the realisation of Virtue, Wealth, Love and Beatitude ” says the *Sabdasthoma*. The only World-records that come up to the mark are the Ramayana of Valmeeki, the Mahabharata of Vedavyasa and the Samhita of Gargacharya.

Valmeeki divides his grand epic into the *Purvakanda*, narrating the life and adventures of Sree Rama, the Divine Incarnation ; and the *Uttarakanda*, where Vasishtha initiates Sree Rama into the Science of Brahman. The former inculcates virtue, wealth and love ; the latter forms the Light on the Path of Perfection.

Virtue consists in the proper discharge of duties that are consonant to the Holy Books, that do not militate against the Right, and that mark the stage of Evolution the Jeeva has reached.

Wealth is the acquisition and the enjoyment of the goods of this world, power, place, fame, authority, influence and the like.

Love is the master-passion that draws man and woman to one another.

Now, Valmeeki has utilised the various incidents in his epic to exemplify the workings of the above. A father's word is a law to the son; to discharge it to his very best is his duty ; right or wrong, pregnant with weal or woe, he may not stop to consider ; and Rama renounced, with a glad heart, the mighty empire that was his by right and exiled himself to the lonely woods.

Brotherly love, almost ideal, and the attitude of the youngers towards the eldest, no where finds more touching expression than in the relations of Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Satrughna to one another.

A wife's place is ever by the side of her husband. Sunshine or rain, joy or sorrow, pleasure or pain, she should ever share it with him; and Seeta is the ideal wife for all time.

Sages, hermits, and holy men form the life and soul of a people ; and a king's highest duty consists in seeing that they want for nothing and are protected against everything that might interfere with the proper discharge of their noble trust. Rama passed his word to the saints of Dandaka and laid low Viradha, Kabandha, Ravana and the other workers of evil.

Kings and Emperors in the pride of their power and might, are as nothing before the spiritual glory of a Brahmana; the superhuman efforts of Visvamithra and the humble reverence paid by Sree Rama, the Divine king, to the pure and the holy Ones are a lesson for all mankind.

Strength and power, wealth and valour far above the human, and fierce embattled hosts countless as the sands of the ocean, are as nothing, if the possessor thereof turns away from the Path of Right to work evil upon the good and the wise and uproot the foundations of Law and Justice ; and the dreadful fate that overtook Ravana and the millions that owned his sway, is a warning not to be despised.

Virtue ever outweighs wealth in the estimation of the good ; Rama gave up, with a joyful heart, the kingdom of the Ikshvakus and the wealth of the earth.

Any service rendered to us, be it the slightest, should ever bear fruit in us, even like the seed of the spreading banyan. Jatayu, the Vulture-King, defended Seeta with his life; and Rama, the incarnation of the Divine, rendered unto him the last offices and passed him on to the Worlds of Light.

Sugreeva offered him his friendship, consolation and help, when Rama wandered, heavy of heart and sore of foot, in the frightful solitudes of Dandaka ; he preserved for him the ornaments that Seeta threw down to him when she was spirited away by Ravana ; in return, Rama gave him back his wife and a kingdom along with her.

Vibheeshana, sore afflicted and pierced to the heart by the cruel words of his brother, sought refuge with Rama ; length of life beyond that of mortals and unbounded sway over the Rakshasas of the world were his reward.

Love should be ever in consonance with Virtue and Law ; else, it is sweet poison. Dasaratha laid his manhood at the feet of the imperious Kaikeyi, exiled his noble son to the dreadful forests even in the prime of his youth ; and—the slave of Love paid for it with his life. Rama yielded to the importunities of Seeta to chase the golden deer and—lost her. Vali deprived his brother of his wife, all unjustly and in hasty wrath, and—his life was the forfeit. Ravana laid violent hands on Seeta and—doomed himself to destruction, root and branch.

True it is there are only some episodes in it that place our feet on the Path of Liberation ; but, the mystery of Man, the Universe and the Absolute, the various Paths that lead to It do not find a prominent place in it. The Uttarakanda or as it is better known, the Vasishtha Ramayana, deals with it in its entirety. The Poorvakanda was taught to the royal

youths Kusa and Lava ; and the Science of Self may not be properly expounded therein. It is divided into six cantos of 24,000 stanzas; the sixth is further divided into the Poorva (Yuddha) and the Uttarakandas. The spiritual teachings in the Ramayana are given by Valmeeki to Bharadwaja. It is a monumental work by itself. It is arranged into six Kandas of 32,000 stanzas, the last canto being divided into the Poorva and the Uttara. It is more popularly known as Gnana Vasishtha Ramayana and the Yoga Vasishtha Rama-yana. There are no grounds to class this among the minor Puranas, as some have done.

VII. *Its divine origin.*

The Almighty Father sat on His Throne of Glory in the highest heavens. His consorts—Sree, Boomi and Neela (Divine Energies)—graced His side. The Angels of Light and the Emancipated Souls thronged the Divine Presence, singing His glories. But, the Lord's look was far away, to where His children groped in darkness on this mortal earth. "Ah me, the pity of it! they are as well entitled to be in my presence as any of these ; but, they will not. As the grains of gold in the ball of wax, they are swirled among the waves of Matter and are lost." And out of the depths of His infinite compassion towards those poor souls ever bound to the Wheel of Time, He provided vehicles of manifestation to them, that might dedicate them to His service and thereby reach His feet. Yet, they *would* not be saved. A poor wretch was wringing his hands in despair on the banks of a torrent roaring in its flood. A kind soul took pity on him and gave him a boat well-furnished, saying, " My good man ! weep not. Take this boat of mine, and cross over to yonder bank swiftly and in safety." The poor wretch was profuse in his thanks ; he jumped into the boat and set her head against the current. But, alas ! when he was on the safe

side of the stream, his evil genius put it into his head to go along with the current, to where the river shattered itself to pieces over a sheer wall of rock and lost itself in the abyss below. Even so, the children for whom His heart bled misused the means of salvation so mercifully furnished them and were engulfed in the Quicksands of Pleasure. Then the Lord said to Himself, "Poor things ! they have no means of following the Right and keeping away from the Wrong"; and He gave them His commandments—*The Vedas*.

Yet, his children *would* not be saved. They failed to construe the Holy Books aright ; they misunderstood it ; they perverted its purpose. Then, like a king who sets out to reclaim his rebellious subjects by the might of his presence, He chose to come down from his Worlds of Light down to this dark dull Earth and resolved to take birth as Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Satrughna; for, Example is better than Precept. The king sets the pace and his subjects do but follow him. Meanwhile, Brahma and the bright Gods had sought his protection from the terrible Rakshasas that hung like a pall of darkness over the worlds. Dasaratha had gone through untold austerities to have the privilege of being His earthly father. Further, has he not promised to all beings, "I come down among you in every cycle to lay low the wicked, exalt the righteous and to restore the Great Law." As Rama, he rid the worlds of Ravana and was a type of filial duty. As Lakshmana, he killed Indra jit and lived out a life of sweet service to the Lord. As Bharata, he destroyed the wicked Gandharvas and made his life a touching lesson of supreme surrender to the Lord; and as Satrughna, he rid the earth of Lavana and illustrated in his life the noble doctrine of absolute service to the Lord's Elect.

Brahma, the Fashioner of the Worlds, ever intent upon the welfare of all beings, thought it a duty and a privilege to preserve for all time the grand Truths so taught

and so lived. He sung the Life of Sree Rama, in 100 crores of stanzas ; Narada and the other sages of the Brahmaloka learnt it from him. Meanwhile, Brahma cast about for some pure and devoted soul through whom the message could be conveyed to the sons of men. Valmeeki, purified by centuries of devout meditation upon Sree Rama, and of recitation of his Holy Name, shone brightest among the mortals. And to him so nobly qualified for the task, he sent his son Narada. "Valmeeki received from Narada the life of Rama sung at great length by Brahma." (*Matsya Purana*). It dispelled for ever the doubts and questionings under which Valmeeki's soul had been labouring. The veil was lifted from the face of the Great Mystery. Brahma gave him the Open Eye of the Seer ; and the result was the grandest and the best epic poem in the world—even Ramayana, that forms the key to the heart-doctrine of the Vedas (*Go.'s Preface to his commentary upon the Ramayana*).

VIII.—*It is an Exposition of the Gayathri.*

Parabrahman the Absolute, is the Alpha and the Omega. The Pranava or the Word of Power, tries to convey to the universe the Triple Mystery, the Three in One and the One in Three. The Gayathri is an amplification, though faint, of the Word. It is the quintessence of the Vedas, the germ out of which they evolved. Of the 7 crores of Words of Power, it is the mightiest. The twice-born Brahmanas, Kshathriyas and Vaisyas meditate upon its countless mysteries when the Sun, the symbol of Life and Light, rises, when he stands high in the heavens and when he kisses his bride on the threshold of the west. It is the only means to secure the Aims of Life.

Now, wonderful to behold ! every thousand stanzas in

the Ramayana begin with one of the letters of the Gayathri. Hence, the Ramayana is something more than an epic poem ; something higher than a work of art.

Cantos	Chapters	Stanzas	Thousands
Bala	1	1	1,000
"	30	17	2,000
"	63	3	3,000
Ayodhya	14	37	4,000
"	44	5	5,000
"	71	33	6,000
"	99	25	7,000
Aranya	12	4	8,000
"	47	10	9,000
Kishkindha	4	3	10,000
"	31	1	11,000
"	67	50	12,000
Sundara	27	14	13,000
"	46	9	14,000
"	68	29	15,000
Yuddha	28	26	16,000
"	50	40	17,000
"	68	1	18,000
"	80	43	19,000
"	112	26	20,000
"	131	20	21,000
Uttara	22	8	22,000
"	40	29	23,000
"	77	27	24,000

IX.—‘The Inner Meaning.’

“ The Puranas and the Ithihosas unlock the mysteries of the Vedas ” say the wise. Ramayana should, in consequence, deal with the problems of Life and Being.

“ From whom does this universe derive its existence ? In whom does it live and have its being ? To whom does it

go back when its purpose has been served ? It it Parabrahman " (Taiththareeya Upanishad). " But what is Is to us, Brahma, the Ancient of Days ? Vishnu, the Presever ? Rudra, the Destroyer ? " Valmeeki's opening lines voice forth the same query. " Who is he that embodies in himself all these manifold excellences ? " " Sree Rama " replies Narada. And at the end of the Poem, Brahma reiterates the same Truth. " In the beginning Thou wert ; later on I was begotten of Thee. The whole universe was latent in Thee. Over the Great Waters Thou didst brood. The lotus came out of Thy navel ; and on it I was. Thou didst ordain me as the Fashioner of Forms.—*V. R. VII. 104.*

The poet touches upon this point more than once in the course of the poem. " Meanwhile Maha Vishnu, the Lord of the Universe, manifested himself unto them, in His supreme glory. The Conch, the Wheel and the Mace graced His hands. The graceful folds of His vesture flashed as lightning through a storm-cloud"— do. I. 15. He is the Refuge of all ; " Lord of Might, Terror of Foes ! Thou art our sole Refuge"—do.

All creation lifts its voice on high, in praise of Him and Him alone ; " Then the Gods, the Sages, the Rudras, the Gandharvas and the Apsarasas sang high the praises of the Lord in strains of noble melody."—do.

He is the Great One. Tapas alone can open our eye to His glory ; " I know the mystery of Rama, the Great One, whose will is omnipotent. Vasishtha and the other sages here know it too, for, illimitable is their knowledge and power." (I. 19). " This Great Being shines resplendent beyond Darkness" (*Purusha Sooktha*). " The Brahmanas know Him through the teachings of the Vedas, through renunciation, through immortal Tapas." (Sruthi).

He is the Causeless Cause ; " Brahma, the Fashioner," came out of the Unmanifested." (I. 70).

He is higher than the highest : “ Then the Gods and the Sages knew that He was the mightier.” (I. 75).

He is Time and Boundless Duration ; “ The Gods prayed to Him for deliverance from Ravana, whose hand lay heavy upon the worlds ; and the Lord of Time, Maha Vishnu, came down unto the Earth.” (II. 1).

He is the Eternal Light and pervades all ; “ From the Unmanifested came Brahma, Eternal, all-knowing and all-powerful. (II. 110).

Inconceivable is His might; “ No limit do I see to the power of Him, whom Seetha, the child of Janaka, owns as her Lord.” (III. 38).

All excellences attain their perfect expression in Him.—Being, Consciousness and Bliss. “ Thou art the goal of the good; Thou art the sole refuge of the miserable ; Thou art the balm that healeth the wounds of sorrow ; Thou art fame ; Thou knowest all things great and small ; Thou art the model of filial duty ; Thou art the Unknowable, the Unattainable ; Thou dost transcend the senses ; Thou teachest by example the highest Law ; Thy Name is engraved on the face of Eternity ; Thou art the head and foundation of knowledge and wisdom ; Thou art gentle and patient, even as Mother Earth ; Thy eyes are lovely as the fresh-blown petals of the red-lotus.” (IV. 15-22).

He is the Great Destroyer. “ The self-born One, the Ancient of Days, the four-faced Brahma ; the Destroyer of the Asuras of the Three Cities, the three-eyed Rudra ; and the lord of the Celestials, Indra, dare not come between Rama and the object of his righteous wrath. (V. 51).

The source of Form and Name, countless are His manifestations ; “ I have heard it say that Maha Vishnu is higher than the highest, is the One, the Unmanifested,

endless and beyond thought and speech. Has He taken form as this monkey and come down among us to work our destruction ?" (V. 54).

Q. "In the beginning was Hiranyagarbha" ; "Darkness was not, nor day, nor night ; Being was not, nor Non-being. It alone was." "Indra took countless forms through his power of illusion." Such Vedic texts lead us to conclude that Brahma, Rudra, Indra and such like may well be the cause of the universe.

A. "This great Yogi (Adept) is the Supreme Self, eternal, without beginning, middle or end. He is beyond Darkness, beyond the Mahat (the Great Element). There is none higher than He. He is the stay of the universe and its support. The divine weapons grace His hands. On His broad breast shines Sreevaths, the mole. Mahalakshmi is his inseparable partner. He is invincible, immortal and eternal."

The above passage teaches us that He is the Supreme and no other. Be-ness, Self and similar expressions do but denote Him ; and Brahma, Siva, Indra and every other name is His. He is the highest Self. He is the Lord of matter and wisdom. He is Narayana ; "Thou art Narayana ; Thou art the eternal consort of the Divine Mother ; Thou art omnipresent ; Thou art the Great Boar with a single horn ; Thou art the slayer of the wicked, past, present and future." (VI. 120).

Q. "The Gods regarded Vishnu as the higher." But we need not take that it was his natural position ; but one acquired by Thapas from Siva.

A. Then, Rudra had no reason to be angry ; but, we read that he was consumed with wrath when he handed over his bow. Besides, we read that he had no place of worship in Agasthya's House of Gods ; nor was he regarded

as an object of worship. "Brahma, Vishnu, Agni, Indra, Soorya, Chandra, Baga, Kubera and others had their altars of worship." (III. 13).

Q. Why not take it that the above Beings came down to render worship to him ? Rudra, as the highest, does not naturally find mention along with them ; for, we read "Here do Gods, Gandharvas, Siddhas and Sages repair to offer their respects to Agasthya." (do. 11.)

A. Not so ; the passage refers to the Celestials of the heavenly world, and not to Brahma or Vishnu. Besides, we erect places of worship to enshrine the Gods we bow to ; not that the Gods come down there to pay reverence to us. Moreover, Paramasiva was not invited to partake of the offerings during the sacrifice of Daksha. He is not an object of worship to be placed on the same level as the Lord Vishnu ; else, he would have found a place in Agasthya's temple. Salvation is in the hands of the Supreme One ; and who is it but Sree Rama, whose grace lifted Jatayu to the Worlds of Light ? Hence, the Ramayana teaches us that Maha Vishnu is the supreme Brahman, whom we perceive through his Holy Writ. "Listen to me, while I speak to the thousands assembled here. This poem that sings of your life and deeds, is the best and the grandest of all. This epic that unfolds your countless excellences to the hearts of all, is the first of its kind. None do I know that better deserves to be the hero of any epic, now and for ever ; for, you are the rest and support of all " (do. VII. 98.) That is how Brahma speaks of the Lord ; and he stands nearest to Him. It is but a waste of time and labour to apply the Ramayana and its incidents to Rudra.

Q. If Rama be the Supreme One, how is it that we hear of his worshipping the sun to strengthen himself against Ravana ?

A. "When you are in Rome do as the Romans do." He was in the world of men, and should behave as such. This explains his discipleship under Visvamithra.

So, the Balakanda teaches us that the Lord Vishnu is the Cause of the universe ; in the Ayodhyakanda, He appears as the Protector ; in the Aranyakanda, He leads his children unto his House ; in the Kishkindhakanda, His manifold excellences are brought home to us ; in the Sundarakanda, He appears in his irresistible might ; and in the Yuddhakanda, He is declared to be the goal of all knowledge, human and divine.

ii

Q. This Supreme One, how is he realised ?

A. "He who brought into manifestation Brahma before the rest, He who imparted unto him the beginning and the end of all wisdom, He who illuminates our intellect and our soul, as supreme Deity thereof, Him do I take refuge in, desirous of Liberation." This Vedic text is the key-note of Valmeeki's poem. Supreme surrender to the Lord is the best means to accomplish our desires.

(a) "Meanwhile, the Lord of the Worlds, Maha Vishnu manifested himself unto them in his infinite glory. The Divine Weapons graced his hands, while his bright garments flashed as lightning from the heart of storm-clouds"—(VR. I. 15). The Supreme Lord was anxiously awaiting the moment when the Gods would appeal to him for help and protection. His glory was heightened as it were by the joy that the time had come for him to do good to them. He was ever armed and ever ready. "Smite Ravana sore ; burn him up" cried the Gods one and all. This is the first example we have of Surrender.

(b) The episodes of Sunashepa and Thrisanku teach that the highest duty lies in protecting those that seek

refuge with us. Ever seek the feet of Him who is able and willing, out of the mercy of his heart, to save you ; and you will not have asked in vain.

(c) " Lakshmana clasped the feet of his brother and took refuge with him, praying Seetha to intercede for him. (II. 31). So, an efficient Intercessor is a necessary element in Surrender.

" Until Rama grants my prayer, I quit not this hermitage, but shall ever call upon him in fasting and penance (II. 111).

Bharatha took refuge with Rama, as he desired to bring about his restoration to the throne of Ayodhya. But, the Lord had come out of it to fulfil his promise to the Devas ; so, he entrusted to Bharatha his sandals. He annihilated Ravana and his brood, redeemed his promise to the Gods, and later on, fulfilled the object which Bharatha sought at his hands. So, Surrender is never in vain.

(d) The holy hermits of Dandaka took refuge with Rama saying, "We live within your dominions and are entitled to your care and protection. We care not whether you are a crowned king at Ayodhya or a religious recluse in these lonely forests. You are our king everywhere and for ever." (III. 1). Residence within the dominions of the Lord forms a claim upon his mercy and amounts to seeking refuge with him.

(e) " The Crow of black heart sought shelter with his father, the king of the Gods, with the Celestials and with the Sages. But, they turned him away. The three worlds held none that dared to take him in. Back he came to where Rama sat and threw himself at his feet. The Lord of Compassion, the refuge of all, looked down in pity at the suppliant. His offence deserved cruel death and worse ; yet, the Lord spared him." (V. 38). This is another mode of taking refuge—clasping the feet of the deliverer.

(f) " You have offended Sree Rama ; I see no other means of saving yourself ; lift your hands to Lakshmana and appeal to his mercy." (*V. R.* IV. 32) This advice of Thara reveals to us yet another mode of it—clasping our hands in humility and reverence.

(g) " Ravana ! Have you a mind to live in peace and prosperity ? Would you save yourself from a terrible death ? Then, make a friend of Sree Rama, the Ideal man ; for, know you not that he embodies in himself the Law ? They that seek refuge of him, for ever leave behind sorrow and pain, fear and grief " (*Ib.* V. 21). So said Seetha. Verily, the turning of the heart to the Lord amounts to taking refuge in him.

(h) " Ravana treated me as a vile slave and put me to shame before all. His sharp words pierced my heart through and through. So, I have cast behind me wife and child, wealth and luxury, and sought refuge with Rama." (*Ib.* VI. 17). Vibheeshana, who spoke the above, teaches us that we should rid ourselves of such obstacles as would stand in the way of our seeking refuge with Him. Further on, we read that " Rama spread the sacred grass on the sands of the ocean and lay upon them with folded hands and face turned towards the East (*Ib. id.* 22).

Q. But, his efforts were in vain ?

A. Our would-be saviour must have the heart and arm to free us from our sorrow and fear ; but, the Ruler of the Waters was not one such.

(i) " A terrible doom hangs over the heads of the Rakshasas and through Rama. So, let us lift our hands in humble entreaty to Seetha to intercede for us." (*Ib.* V. 27). Thus spoke Thrijata; and the other Rakshasi-guards signified their assent thereto by their silence. Later on, this bore wonderful fruit, in that Seetha saved them from the vengeance of Hanuman. So, it appears that one can take refuge and extend the benefits to others.

(j) Vibheeshana sought shelter of Rama ; but, the four ministers that accompanied him were saved along with him. So, the Lord's protection extends even to those that accompany the suppliant.

Enough has been said to prove that Valmeeki regards the Doctrine of Refuge as the sole path that leads to Liberation, and realises for us our utmost wishes here and hereafter.

iii

Service to the Lord is the first fruits of our efforts in this direction ; and then, the delight of His presence. This is another Truth underlying the epic.

(a) The Gods sought refuge with the Lord from the cruelties of Ravana. But, they took birth of Yakshas, Gandharvas, Apsarasas and Sages to render homage and sweet service to Him ; the death of Ravana came later on.

(b) "Brother mine ! waking or sleeping, day or night, your humble servant am I, in the lordly capital or in the lonely woods." (*Ib.* II. 31). Lakshmana spoke so in the height of his joy. Rendering humble service to the Lord and our best, at all times, in all places, in all conditions of life is the supreme reward of Surrender.

(c) Bharatha prayed that Rama should come back to Ayodhya as its king, only that he may be allowed to render him service. But, he was made to offer them to the sandals of Rama before he realised his wishes.

(d) The saints and sages that abode in the forest of Dandaka claimed the protection of Rama from the cruel Rakshasas. But, they were rewarded first by his sweet presence and sweeter speech. He dawned upon their vision like the radiant moon, and they poured out their hearts in fervent blessings.

(e) "Sugreeva, the child of the Sun, gave this signal proof of his valour and humbled the pride of Ravana ; after

which, he flew back to the side of Rama." (*Ib.* VI. 40). Said Vibheeshana "I have put behind me Lanka, my friends in it and my wealth. My life, my kingdom, my friends, my all is centred in you." (*Ib. id.* 19) Both looked upon the humble service that they offered to Rama as the prime reward of seeking his protection.

(f) The Crow besought him to spare his life ; and it was done. His cry was not in vain. But, he must he taught to turn his feet for ever from the way of the wicked ; and his eye was the forfeit.

(g) Rama of the Axe came with a heart tall with pride ; and Sree Rama drew his shaft to his ear to destroy for ever the hopes of the proud warrior. But, when the scales fell from the eyes of Parasurama, he recognised His Lord and Master ; and prayed that the shaft may destroy what stood in the way of his attaining Emancipation.

(h) The Ruler of the Waters heeded not the command of Rama ; but, when he found that Rama's shaft was consuming him, he prayed to be saved. Rama, out of his infinite compassion, spared him ; nay, the shaft was directed against the wicked Asuras that harassed the ocean-king.

He who seeks refuge must be conscious of his utter inability to save himself. He should be denied shelter by every one. Now, Rama possessed not these essentials. Further, the Saviour must be omniscient, must be omnipotent, which the ocean-king was not. But, Vibheeshana, proud in the fulfilment of *his* prayers, requested Sree Rama to imitate him. But Sree Rama was not Vibheeshana ; nor the ocean-king Sree Rama.

There are no stringent conditions about this Doctrine of Refuge—time, place, qualifications and the like.

Hence, the Ramayana is an Exposition of the Doctrine of Surrender (*Saranagathi Grantha*).

The Lord's might and his wisdom were made manifest

in his breaking of the bow of Rudra ; in the humbling of Parasurama; in the piercing of the seven Sala trees ; and in the bridge that he cast over the rebellious ocean. His behaviour when he was separated from Seetha, brings out the supreme compassion of his heart and its pathos. His friendship towards Guha, Sabari and Sugreeva , reflects his goodness. He protected Visvamithra's sacrifice from the Rakshasas that threatened to destroy it. He saved the sages of the Dandakaranya from the night-rangers that afflicted them sore. He gave refuge to the Devas who groaned under the iron heel of Ravana, Indrajith, Kumbhakarna and their followers. Those that had the good fortune to be born in his kingdom enjoyed the delight of his presence, and were privileged to have before their eyes a living ideal of everything good and great. And when He went back to his abode on high, he took them along with him and gave them a place near his throne. These are proofs enough of the Lord's protective power. We can best realize our heart's fondest hopes only by taking refuge in the Lord, who shows forth in perfection such excellences as power, compassion and goodness. But yet, service to the Lord comes before the attainment of a place near his Throne of Glory. That is our chief reward ; the others are but incidental, and by the way.

The Glorious life of Seetha is how Valmeeki has named his great work. Thrice was she separated from her lord and husband ; supreme compassion is the key-note of her character ; she is after the Lord's own heart. Now these attributes are essential to the One who is to be our, Intercessor when we take refuge in the Lord.

(a) The black-hearted crow owed his life to *Seetha's* intercession. Ravana had it not and lost his life.

(b) Vibheeshana took refuge with Rama through an Intercessor. "The world knows me as Vibheeshana. I take my refuge in Rama. Let him know it" (*Ib.* VI. 17.) Likewise, Rama accepted the suppliant through Sugreeva, the Intercessor and said, "Lord of the Monkeys ! Bring him unto me." (*Ib. id.* 18.)

(c) Sugreeva himself sought refuge with Rama through Hanuman, who interceded for him.

The above teaches us to know that we should seek the Lord's mercy only through an Intercessor ; or, we lose the benefit of it.

v

We are the servants of the Lord. Lakshmana exemplified this grand truth throughout his long life of devotion. "We are the sons of Dasarathha; and I come next to Rama. His excellences drew me on to serve him"; (*Ib.* IV. 4). "Accept me as your humble servitor. It is perfectly consonant with Law and Justice. Service rendered to you will realize for me the utmost hopes of *my* heart and it will go far to aid *your* work among men." (*Ib.* II. 31), said he, to emphasize the relations between himself and Rama.

vi

Bharatha could not contain himself and wept aloud before the assembled audience. He condemned Vasishtha for giving such pernicious advice. "I and this kingdom do belong to Rama. I pray you to advise me what is just and proper in this contingency." (*Ib. id.* 82). "Lakshmana would not hear of it, and Rama but wasted his words upon him. So he was obliged to install Bharatha as heir-apparent". (*Ib.* VI. 131). The above illustrates the truth that Bharatha, of all, regarded himself as the property of the Lord, body and soul, to do as he liked.

Bharatha started from Ayodhya to pay a visit to his mother's brother and took with him Sathrughna, the faultless. The insidious foes that work our ruin—Love and Hate and their kin—were kept by him under his foot ; and joyfully did he follow his master. (*Ib.* II. 1). He was the living exponent of the sublime Truth, that the best that a man can do is to be at the absolute disposal of the Lord's Elect.

The Supreme, the Individual Self, the Means, the Goal and the Barriers—these are the five Basic Truths of Divine Wisdom. The Ramayana is an authoritative exposition of these, in that the deeds of Rama illuminate the nature of Brahman. The life of Lakshmana typifies the ideal Jeevathma (Individual Self). The various instances of the Doctrine of Surrender illustrate the nature of the Means. The episodes of Bharatha, Vibheeshana and others bring out in definiteness the Goal as embodied in the service rendered to the Lord. And Ravana and his kin represent the Barriers.

(a) The very Gods are no good to save us. Ravana secured marvellous boons and powers from Brahma and Siva ; but, they failed him against Rama.

(b) He that gives us birth can lift no hand to save us from grief. Dasarathha had to be an impotent spectator of his son's misfortunes.

(c) The crow insulted Seetha past forgiveness ; and neither its parents, the king and the queen of the Immortals, nor its kith and kin could stand between it and its fate.

(d) Sons and brothers cannot ward off the danger or the difficulty that overhangs us ; else, Vibheeshana and

Kumbhakarna could have saved Ravana, their brother, from the wrath of Rama ; or for the matter of that, Indrajith, his son, mightier than all.

So, it is brought home to us that *the Lord is our only refuge.*

x

Hanuman and his doings in the capital of the Rakshasas is a hint to us, that we should seek to know of the nature of the Lord only through the Teacher.

xi

"Rama, the terror of his foes, will shatter this town to pieces with his fiery arrows, and lead me forth hence in triumph ; no other course befits his greatness and valour" said Seetha (*Ib. V. 68.*) Even when one is qualified to receive the Lord's Grace, he should patiently wait until the hour strikes for him to throw off his mortal coil, and stand before the Lord. For, Lanka, the capital of Ravana, is but the group of vehicles that the Self uses. Ravana, is the sense of I and Kumbhakarna is the sense of Mine. Indrajith and all the fierce-hearted Rakshasas do but typify Desire, Anger, Greed, etc. Vibheeshana, the bright exception, personifies Discriminative Knowledge. Seetha, the Individual Self, is confined by past Karma within the material vehicles. Hanuman, the Teacher, opens its eye to the mysteries of the Lord. It rests with Him to dissolve this fleshly tabernacle and lead out the imprisoned self into the light of Liberation.

xii

Such noble Beings as Rama are to be our ideals of conduct now and for ever ; while Ravana and the like, are the rocks upon which we would wreck and which we should avoid,

From the account of the inhabitants of the thrice-blessed Kosala, we learn that we should ever seek to dwell only where the Lord deigns to be.

The Ramayana must of necessity form the subject of daily study and meditation, in that it expounds the mysteries underlying the Two Truths.

The Balakanda treats of the marriage of Rama with Seetha ; in other words, it describes the Absolute, of which Matter and Consciousness are the two poles. This unmanifested aspect of Father—Mother, Purusha—Prakrithi or Parabrahman—Moolaprakrithi is expressed by the syllable *Sreemath*.

The Ayodhyakanda narrates at great length, the perfections of Rama, and his ideal observance of all duties. It represents for us the Supreme one as Narayana, in his manifested aspect, 'He who broods over the waters.' This is the connotation of the next word *Narayanasya*.

The Aranyakanda gives us a vivid and entrancing picture of the Lord's divine form and beauty. This is how He shines forth in his Garment of the universe.

" In the roaring loom of Time I play,
And weave for God the garment thou seest Him by."—*Goethe*.

This is the inner sense of the next word *Charanam*.

The Kishkindha and Sundara kandas are object-lessons of the doctrine of Supreme Surrender to the Lord. This is the next and the natural step that one should take, when he has grasped, through his mind and spirit, by intense thought and meditation, the mystery of the Absolute, the Unmanifested and the Manifested. The next syllable *Saranam* expresses for us the quintessence of this teaching.

The Yuddhakanda tells us how Vibheeshana, born and brought up in the most adverse surroundings, yet, turned

away from the path of the ungodly, took refuge in the Lord and received his reward. The next syllable *Prapadye* lays down the how of it, the actual Process, the practical realization of it.

So far the Poorvakandas of the Ramayana. The Uttarakanda gives us the key to the apparent contradictions in the nature of Ravana, his intense piety, his wide, knowledge, his deep erudition and his terrible acts ; the ultimate motive of his life is laid bare for us—why he abducted Seetha. Those that rendered humble service to the Lord,—those that were labourers in His vine-gard—Hanuman, Vibheeshana, Jambavan, Sugreeva and his monkey hosts—and the happy dwellers in the dominions of Rama, were taken by him even unto where he abode in his Worlds of Light, while some of them remained on earth, faithfully to discharge the trust placed in them by the Lord and work for the regeneration of that great orphan—Humanity. The other part of the Manthra or the Second Truth, voices forth the supreme mystery of Mukthi—Liberation, Emancipation, Beatitude, Consummation, Nirvana, call it what you like.

xv

What Manthra shall we meditate upon all through our life? What is the Word of Power, that will make us Lords of Time and Wisdom ? The Gayathri ; and the Ramayana is but its exoteric exposition. The Lord Almighty, the Veda Purusha, is the Causeless Cause of the Universe. This is the basic truth that underlies the Balakanda. His countless perfections and excellences form the theme of the Ayodhya and the Kishkindhakandas. The divine form, the Robes of Splendour in which He manifests himself, is described to us in the Aranyakanda, as the ravishing beauty of Rama, that attracted unto him the sages, the saints, the ascetics

and the hermits of the wild woods of Dandaka, men of stern self-control and iron discipline. The glory of the Lord, in so far as it shines through his Garments of Matter, the Universe, is symbolised in the episodes that form the subject of the Sundarakanda, *The Beautiful*,—aptly so named.

The Yuddhakanda imparts to us the means of reaching His Feet. The Uttarakanda takes us to the Goal—Mukthi. Now, the six parts of the Gayathri mantra set themselves to teach the same Truths.

xvi

Shun those that would seek to destroy your faith and devotion to the Lord.

Turn thy heart away from the atheist, the materialist, the ungodly, who would have no god but himself and no law but his will. The arguments put into the mouths of Jabali (*V. R. II.* 109) and Lakshmana (*V. R. VI.* 83.) are refuted most effectively and conclusively by Rama. It is a warning to all right-thinking men to keep away from the teachings of the Charvakas (Materialists), the Madhyamikas (Buddhist Nihilists) and the like.

xvii

Great men are often beset with troubles and difficulties. So, we should gradually wean ourselves away from the joys and sorrows of worldly life and centre ourselves in the Eternal. Rama and Lakshmana were bound by the divine weapons, the Nagasthra and the Brahmosthra. The Divine One had to renounce his kingdom, power, friends and relation, and exile himself to the frightful solitudes of Dandaka. The wife of his heart was taken away from him by force by a Rakshasa. Hence, we are exhorted not to place our trust on things transient and vain, *Govindarajeya*,

The Inner Meaning. II.

Mahavishnu, who is Beness (*Sat*), Consciousness (*Chith*), and Bliss (*Ananda*), is the shoreless ocean. The desire that sprang in Him to relieve the Earth of her burden of woe and misery, is the first wave in the still calm waters of it. The Individual Self is the first spray thrown out of it. The city of Ayodhya is the Akasa within the heart. Dasarathha, its ruler, is the pure Anthahkarana (Composed of *Manas* Mind, *Buddhi* Reason, *Chiththa* Feeling and *Ahamkara* Egoism) dominated by the quality of *Sathva*, Harmony. His queen Kausalya is *Buddhi* Reason in its *Sathvika* aspect. Rama, the son born to them, is the Self in its *Thureeya* state (beyond Jagrath, waking consciousness, Swapna, dreaming consciousness and Sushupthi consciousness in dreamless slumber). Lakshmana is the same Self in the Jagrath, Bharatha in the Swapna, and Sathrughna in the Sushupthi. These are the various manifestations of the Self. Rama followed Visvamithra from Ayodhya to guard his sacrificial rite; the *Thureeya* Athma is attracted by the mind. Rama slays Thataka the Rakshasee ; the Self destroys the evil tendencies of the mind. He broke the bow of Siva ; the Self curbs the fleeting course of the mind. He marries Seetha ; the Self is enveloped in Maya. Rama puts down Rama of the Axe ; the Self obtains mastery over the Karmic Vasanas (affinities generated in previous births). He exiles himself to the forests of Dandaka at the word of Kaikeyee ; Buddhi in its Thamasic (dark) aspect, leads the Self into Samsara (material existence). He kills the monster Viradha—the rooting out of Pride. Rama, Lakshmana and Seetha reside in a lowly cottage at Panchavati ; the Self descends at last into the house of flesh, built up of the five elements and rests there after his long journey. Soorpanakha assails him, and loses her nose and ears ; Desire is deprived of its sting. Khara, Dooshana and Thrisiras fall in battle with

Rama ; Lust, Anger and Greed are destroyed. Mareecha lures Rama from his abode, and is laid low ; the Self shakes itself off from the trammels of Delusion. He is parted from Seetha ; the Self is freed from the bonds of Maya in its pure aspect. Ravana carries her off ; Egoism overpowers Maya. Kabandha, the deformed, falls beneath the sword of Rama ; Grief and Sorrow are annihilated. He comes across Hanuman ; the Self has an overflow of pure devotion. He seeks the friendship of Sugreeva ; the Self is endowed with Right Discrimination. Vali is shot down by him ; the Self destroys Ignorance. Later on, he secures the aid and alliance of Vibheeshana ; the Self develops its will so as to render itself invincible. He causes a bridge to be thrown over the wide ocean ; the Self finds a means to cross the waves of Nescience. Lanka on the top of Thrikoota, is the Linga Deha (the subtle body), characterised by the three Gunas (Rhythm, Mobility, and Inertia). Rama slays in battle dire Kumbhakarna, Indrajith and Ravana ; the Self triumphs over Conceit, Envy and Egoism. Seetha passes through fire to vindicate her purity ; Maya, rendered impure through its association with Egoism, passes through the fire of Purification. They leave Lanka and travel back to Ayodhya ; from the consciousness in the subtle body back to the Akasa in the heart. Rama is crowned king over the dominions of his ancestors ; the Self experiences Supreme Bliss. Sometime after, Seetha is sent away to the hermitage of Valmeeki ; the Self parts with Maya. He takes her back to himself ; Maya in its Sathvika aspect is eternally wedded to the Self. At last, Rama descends into the waters of Sarayu ; the Akasa in the heart is unified with the Boundless Akasa. And this is the realization of the Self as Beness, Consciousness and Bliss. This is Mukthi, the Consummation—
A. R. Vilasakanda III.

The Inner Meaning. III

The sea that separated Lanka from the mainland, 100 Yojanas across, is the shoreless sea of Samsara, characterised by the consciousness of I and Mine. Lanka is but the Upadhi or Vehicle of the Jeevathma. Everything but the Supreme Self is dependent upon it—like a woman. Nescience (*avidya*) is the Asoka garden. The pure Buddhic aspect of the consciousness of the Jeevathma is Hanuman. Kumbhakarna, Ravana and Vibheeshana stand for the three Gunas, Sathva (Rhythm), Rajas (Mobility), and Thamas (Inertia). Hanuman gives Seetha the ring of her Lord as a token ; initiates Buddhi the Individual Self, in the Tharaka Manthra (the word of liberation). The Jeeva must do away with the notion that he is dependent upon any other thing but the Lord ; Hanuman sets Lanka on fire. The griefs and tribulations of the Jeeva are laid before the Lord by the compassionate Buddhi (Pure Reason) ; Hanuman takes back to Rama the news of Seetha's miserable state. Rama crosses over to Lanka in the might of his power ; the Jeeva within the Upadhi is blessed with a vision of the Lord. The fall of the Rakshasa brothers is but the annihilation of the Rajasa and Thamasa Gunas. The ministers and followers of Ravana are the modifications of the Rajasic and Thamasic Consciousness. Vibheeshana is installed as monarch of Lanka ; the pure Sathvic guna is enthroned in the Upadhis. Rama causes Seetha to be brought unto him ; the Jeeva realises the Higher Consciousness. She passes through fire ; the Self bathes in the cleansing waters of the Viraja and casts off the Karmic affinities latent in the Sookshma Sareera. The God of Fire renders back Janaki to Rama ; Self puts on its Robes of Light, in which it can stand before the Throne. Seetha travels back to Ayodhya with Rama in the aerial car Pushpaka ; the Individual

Self sits by the right hand of the Lord. Sree Rama is enthroned at the capital of the Ikshvakus and Seetha by his side ; the Jeevathma becomes one with the Brahman. Sugreeva, Angada, and the leaders of the monkey host stand for Manas (Mind), Chitta (Feeling), and the other Emotions. The monkeys themselves are the mental functions. Hanuman and his fellows break down the honey-grove, the royal preserves of Sugreeva ; the various modifications of the Mind are controlled and stilled. Rama and his forces cross the Ocean of Egoistic conciousness—(*Anonymous*).

The Inner Meaning. IV

The Pranava, the Word, is the Beginning and the End of every thing. From its first letter A, arose Lakshmana, the Visva; he is the Jeeva in his Sthoola Sareera (Gross body). From the second letter U, arose Sathrughna, the Thaijasa ; he is the Jeeva in the Sookshma Sareera (Subtle body). From the third letter M, arose Bharatha, the Pragna ; he is the Jeeva in the Karana Sareera (the Causal body). The Ardhamathra (the prolongation of the sound), is Sree Rama, the Supreme Brahman. Seetha is the Moolaprakriti (Primal Matter). Through the force of the presence of Sree Rama, she carries on the functions of Evolution, Preservation and Involution of the Kosmos. As Pranava, she is also styled Prakriti.

Yagnavalkya, the great yogin, approached Athri, the mind-born son of Brahma, and said, “ Mahadeva meditated for countless ages upon the holy name of Sree Rama and sought after him with a devout heart. The Lord manifested himself unto him and said ‘ Brother ! Ask what thou wilt ; and it is thine.’ Mahadeva spake unto Sree Rama, the Supreme One, ‘ Lord ! Grant thou this boon, that the souls that quit their fleshly vehicles on the

banks of the Ganga and especially at Manikarnika, so dear to me, may be freed for ever from the trammels of material existence.' And unto him replied the Lord, 'Brother! Those that quit their mortal coil in the spot sanctified by thy presence, be they men, be they beasts of the field, be they birds of the air, be they the worms that painfully crawl on the earth, all without exception, shall verily come unto me. And as a visible guarantee of the promise I make to you, I do abide for all time in the Holy Kasi. Those that meditate upon me and my Name of Power in that holy spot, are freed from all their sins, even the deadliest ; and this I do solemnly declare unto you. Those that receive from thee and from Brahma my Six-lettered Manthra, are invested with every power that they may desire ; they cross the ocean of Samsara (material existence), and come unto me. They in whose right ears thou whisperest my Manthra when they depart from this life, do sit by me for ever."

Yagnavalkya called unto him Bharadwaja, and said, "The first letter of the mantra of Rama connotes Sree Rama himself, who is Absolute Consciousness, Unbounded Glory and Supreme Splendour. The very Gods ever meditate upon him to secure Emancipation. He who daily recites this holy Manthra is washed pure of all sins. He lays in the accumulated merit of countless sacrificial rites ; the merit of having recited a hundred thousand times, the whole body of the Ithihasas, the Puranas and the Rudra ; the merit of reciting the sacred Gayathri a hundred thousand times ; and the merit of reciting the Pranava millions of times. He exalts ten generations that go before him and ten that come after him. He purifies those whom he comes across. He is a great soul. He realises Beatitude"

The following texts from the far-off Past do reveal the same Truths, " Many are the mantras associated with such

Beings are Ganapathi, Mahadeva, Sakthi, Soorya, Vishnu, and the like; but the manthra of Sree Rama is their Crown. Alone it has power—this Six-lettered Manthra—to confer upon us the highest good—and that most easily. There are no sins it cannot destroy. Hence, the wise know it as ‘the *Royal Manthra*.’ As a spark of fire in a mountain of cotton, it consumes to nothing all sins, conscious or unconscious, that one may commit during the year, during the month, during the fortnight, during the day. The five Deadly Sins and the millions of lesser ones vanish before the might of this Manthra. Bhoothas, Prethas, Pisachas, Koosmandas, Rakshasas and other Beings that inhabit the Bhuvarloka (the Middle world), dare not approach where the holy Manthra is recited. Happiness here, the delights of the world of Gods, and final E-nnunciation are the meed of him who clings to it. The slaughter of animals wild and tame; the sins of our accumulated past lives; the sins of tasting what is forbidden; the sin of robbing a holy Brahmana of his gold or gems; the sin of slaying a Brahmana, a Kshathriya or a Vaisya; the sin of foul incest or adultery; the sin of associating with the wicked, of eating with them, of sleeping with them; the sin of parricide, matricide and regicide; the sin of wantonly defiling our vows and observances; the sins that we consciously commit, waking, sleeping or in dreamless slumber; the sins consciously committed in such holy places as Kurukshethra, Kasi, and the like; the sins that countless pilgrimages to the sacred spots of the earth cannot wash away; the sins that the hardest penances and the severest mortifications cannot wipe off; the sins that a gift of one's own weight in gold cannot condone—all these and much more does the holy Manthra annihilate.

Those lands in which Sree Rama is revered, worshipped and meditated upon, know not famine, plague, pestilence

or sorrow. It has not its equal. It is the easiest passport to the grace of Sree Rama. The Lord grants his devotee length of years and happiness here ; and at the end of his life, He takes him even unto Himself; yea, even unto Himself—" *Ramathapini Upanishad*.

The Inner Meaning. V.

Once upon a time, Sanaka and the other Eternal Virgins approached Hanuman and requested to be initiated in the mysteries of the holy Rama Manthra. And unto them said Hanuman, " Sree Rama is the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Truth, the Path of Emancipation. The Lord Mahadeva, and he alone, knows in its entirety the grand mystery of the Holy Manthra ; for, it forms the subject of his deep meditation ever. The eight-lettered Narayana Manthra, and the five-lettered Siva Manthra are the highest in their line. But, the most potent letters of either, the very heart of them, are drawn out and go to make up the Holy Name. The former, devoid of the single letter, means ' Not towards the securing of the highest heavens,' ; and the latter, shorn of its letter of power, means ' Not towards the realisation of Absolute Goodness.' Hence, the Rama Manthra combines in itself, the essence of all the Mantras dedicated to Siva or Vishnu.

The first letter *R* is the Germ of Fire ; it denotes the Supreme Self, the Sachchidananda, the Self-radiant. The same consonant without the vowel, denotes the Brahman beyond all limitations. The next letter *A* stands for Maya. The union of the two making *Ra*, signifies the descent of the Self-radiant One into Matter. The next letter *Ma* is the Germ of Eternity, and Immortality and denotes Supreme Bliss and Goodness.

As in a tiny seed of the banyan is contained the wide-spreading tree, so in the germ of the Rama Manthra is

contained the whole Universe, animate and inanimate, as the Effect in the Cause. The Supreme Brahman is beyond Maya. The letter *Ra* corresponds to the syllable *That* in the Mahavakya (the Great Sentence); *Ma* stands for *Thwam*; the *union* between the two is rendered by *Asi*. But, the Mahavakya is capable of conferring only Emancipation, while the Rama Manthra secures to us Happiness here and Emancipation hereafter. Besides, it is not allowed to all to recite or to meditate upon the Mahavakya; while the Rama Manthra is the common property of all. As the expression of Pranava, the aspirant for Emancipation or the man of dispassion, or he that has renounced the world to work for it, may with profit to meditate upon it. Hence, it is higher than the Mahavakya and more practically useful. He who grasps and assimilates the manifold mysteries embodied in this Sree Rama Manthra, attains Emancipation even here. Doubt it not, yea, doubt it not."

—*Ramarahasyopanishad.*

The Inner Meaning. VI.

From the letter *A* arose Brahma, known on earth as Jambavan. From the letter *U* arose Upendra, known on earth as Sugreeva. From the letter *M* arose Siva, known on earth as Hanuman. From the Bindu arose the Discus of the Lord, known on earth as Sathrughna. From the Nada arose the Conch, known on earth as Bharatha. From the Kala rose Sesha, known on earth as Lakshmana. The Chit (Consciousness) beyond it, is Seetha. And beyond all, is the Supreme One, Sree Rama. He is Eternal, Pure, Consciousness, Truth, Immortality, Absolute, Perfect—the Supreme Brahman—*Tharasaropanishad.*

The Inner Meaning. VII.

Seetha is Moolaprakriti. The letters forming her name connote Maya. Unmanifested by nature, she sometimes

manifests herself. During the chant of the Holy Writ, she is sensed as the Sabda Brahman (the Logos, the Word) ; this is her first manifestation. King Janaka found her at the point of his plough while he was furrowing the sacrificial ground, and made her his daughter, known on earth as Seetha ; this is her second manifestation. Her third is the primal Unmanifested form.

Though she is dependent upon the Lord, yet she sheds her light on the universe, through the might of his presence. She is the energy that lies behind Evolution, Preservation and Involution. Seetha in her eight-fold manifestation of power is Moolaprakrithi.

As Pranava is her visible symbol, she is also titled Prakrithi—Saunakeeyya.

She is Prakrithi ; She is the Vedas ; She is the Divine Hierarchy ; She is Fame ; She is the Universe ; She is all ; she is the Law; she is the Cause and the Effect. She exists apart from Mahavishnu ; and She is identical with him. As the animate and the inanimate; as gods, sages, men, Asuras, (fallen Angels), Rakshasas (giants), Bhoothas (Elementals) Prethas (shades), and Pisachas (Nature spirits), through infinite modifications of attributes and actions ; as the five Elements, the senses, the mind, the Prana (Vital current), She underlies all the manifested universe.

Ichcha Sakthi, Kriyasakthi and Sakshath Sakthi (Will, Activity and Wisdom) are her prime aspects.

Ichcha Sakthi is again varied as Sree Devi, Bhoo Devi and Neela Devi.

Sree Devi manifests herself as the energy that lies behind Goodness, Power, the Moon, the Sun and the Fire.

Through the Moon she presides force over plants and herbs of occult virtues. As the Kalpa tree, as flowers and fruits, creepers, herbs, medicinal leaves and the Waters of Immortality, she nourishes the Gods.

Through the Sun she supports the Shining Ones by ever increasing the Food ; the cattle, by ever producing grass and fodder ; and all beings, by shedding light and life upon them. She is Time, from its minutest point to the life-period of Brahma—seconds, minutes, hours, day, night, weeks, fortnights, months, seasons, half-years, years, Yugas, manvantaras, kalpas and parardhas. She turns the Wheel of Time.

Through the Fire she makes herself felt as hunger and thirst in all Beings ; she is the face of the Gods into which are thrown the sacrificial offerings to them. She is heat and cold in the plants and the trees of the forest ; she is the fire latent in the wood and transitory on its surface. Thus, Sree Devi works out the Lord's will and comes forth as Sree and Lakshnii to sustain the universe.

Bhoo Devi is the stay and the support of the fourteen spheres, including the seven islands and the seven oceans around them. She is the Pranava, the symbol visible of the Invisible Presence.

Neela Devi is visible in the thousand and one forces that go to sustain all beings, animate and inanimate—the wind, the air, the fire, the water and the like. She is the Great Waters upon which all worlds rest. She is the Frog, one of her mystic symbols.

From the mouth of Mahavishnu arises Nada (Sound). From Nada arises Bindu (the Point). From Bindu comes forth the Pranava. From the Pranava springs forth the Tree of Knowledge (the Vedas), with its branches of Action and Wisdom.

Brahman, whose nature they illuminate, is *Kriya Sakthi*.

Sakshath Sakthi (the Direct Energy) of the Lord is inseparable from him. It lies behind Evolution,

Preservation, Disintegration and Involution, and the other world-processes. It brings about the infinite variety of Form. It is the Differentiated and the Undifferentiated. It is Self-radiance. It is the Power that showers good. It is the inexorable Law that rights Wrong. It is the spiritual splendour of men, of sages and of Gods. It is the heart of Serenity.

The dark mole on the left breast of Mahavishnu, known as Sree Vathsas, symbolises the Ichcha Sakthi as it rests in Him during Pralaya (Involution). It is also known as *Yoga Sakthi* (spiritual powers). The Kalpa tree, the Cow of Plenty, Chinthamani, Sankha, Padma and the other treasures of the Lord of Wealth, nine in number, are the visible results of *Bhoga Sakthi* (psychic powers). This is extremely useful to those that seek the Lord interestedly or out of unalloyed devotion ; and also to those that render service unto him in the shape of raising temples and enshrining his, images therein, so that the devout might meditate upon him through the eight-fold path of Yoga.

Veera Sakthi, the Goddess of Valour, is described thus. Under the spreading fragrance of the Kalpaka tree shines the gem-encrusted throne. The Lotus spreads its graceful petals over it ; and on it sits enthroned the four-armed Goddess of Valour. On all sides stand elephants, bathing her with the Waters of Immortality from the gemmed vessels in their tusks. The eight Yoga-Siddhis (occult powers), Anima; and the rest, are ranged on either side of her. Jaya and her sister Apsarasas wait upon her. The Sun and the Moon illuminate the Hall of Audience. The full moon, the new moon and the half moon hold snow-white umbrellas over her head. Hladini and Maya fan her with chamaras (chowries). Swaha, that nourishes the Gods, and Swadha, that feeds the Fathers, wave fans on either side. In front of her stand the Gods, the Vedas and

the Sciences. And from her seat of power She rules the the universe.—*Seethopanishad.*

The Inner meaning. VIII.

The Gayathri Manthra is the seed of the Tree of Rama-yana; the Rama Raksha is the sprout ; the Vedas are the roots ; and Emancipation is the fruit of it.

Gayathri, the mother of the Vedas, is the root of all. It has three Padas (feet). They that strive after Liberation should meditate upon the Germ, from which the Tree of the Universe sprang, as the material cause of the universe in his Matter aspect, and as the instrumental cause of the same in his Brahman aspect. This is, in brief, the Truth that underlies the first foot. The universe, as the effect, is superimposed by Nescience upon the Supreme Self ; He is the Cause. Hence, we are asked to banish His matter aspect and try to realise His ultimate Brahman aspect alone.

The Vedic text “The Golden Person who is visible in the heart of the Solar Orb,” denotes the Primal Being, Narayana. We should meditate upon the Supreme Self in this aspect of Unbounded Light ; this is His Mayaviroopa (Form of Illusion). “I meditate upon the Ineffable Glory whom men know as Rama and Krishna ; who came down on Earth, time and oft, for the uplifting of the world.” This is what the second foot conveys to us. This is his second manifestation, in which man might more easily meditate upon him. This is the Means to reach the Brahman, whom the first Foot sets out to describe.

“He that directs and controls our Self and its energies”—is what the third foot teaches. He can, out of his grace, curb the fleeting mind and turn it inward towards his feet. This the epitome of the Path of Action, longer and more tortuous.

The three feet of the Gayathri Manthra are the germs out of which springs the Tree of Knowledge with its branches of Wisdom, Meditation and Action.—*Maithrayana Sruthi*

RAMA RAKSHA.

The syllables of the Ramaraksha express the same truths as the Gayathri Manthra; and in them are condensed the incidents of the Ramayana.

1. *May Raghava protect my head.* He who presides over the universe, He who presides over the Annamayakosa (Food-Sheath), may He protect my head that symbolises the universe.

2. *May the son of Dasaratha protect my forehead.* The Pranamayakosa (Prana-Sheath) is drawn by ten horses (organs of sense and action) and is the effect of the Manomayakosa (Mind-Sheath). May he, who presides over it, protect my forehead, the tablet upon which writes my destiny Brahma, who was evolved after the universe. (The Self, as manifested in each of the above sheaths, has a wider consciousness and powers than in the preceding one).

3. *May the son of Kausalya protect my eyes.* He who presides in the Vignanamayakosa (Intuition-Sheath) is endowed with the faculty of cognising all impressions. May he protect my eyes, the channel of all knowledge and wisdom.

4. *May he who is dear to Visvamithra protect my ears.* The Self as manifested in the Anandamayakosa (Bliss Sheath) is filled with infinite compassion towards the universe—innate, unselfish and disinterested. It is he that in the state of Sushupthi does away with all grief and sorrow. He is the embodiment of Bliss and Consciousness. May he protect my ears through which I reach him.

[The first three Manthras superimpose the universe upon Sree Rama, the Parabrahman and the next three help to

remove the illusion. Thus far the nature of the Supreme Brahman, the Absolute, that forms the subject of the first foot of the Gayathri].

5. *May he who protected the sacrifice of Visvamithra guard my nose.* The delights of the heavenly world form the reward of sacrifices. May he, that brings about the result of sacrifices, protect my organs of smell and taste, where-with divine fragrance and taste are experienced.

6. *My he whose heart goes out to the son of Sumithra protect my face.* The Lord's heart goes out towards Hiranyakarbhā, that evolved from Himself and is the best friend of the Jeeva. Those that attain Emancipation in the ordinary way reach the world of Brahma ; there they are initiated into the mysteries of the Absolute; and when Brahma goes back to the Lord, they go along with him.

7. *May he who is the fountain of all knowledge protect my organ of speech.* Knowledge is the only means of reaching him. May he protect my organ of speech through which I acquire knowledge.

8. *May he whom Bharatha reverences protect my neck.* Those that follow the Path of Action worship him with sacrificial rites. "The Brahmanas seek to know It by sacrifices"—Sruthi. Manthras, Sthothras and Sasthras form the component parts of sacrificial rites. They should ever find a place in the throat, the channel through which they pass from the heart. Hence, the prayer to protect that portion of the body. The Jeeva lays by much merit by such holy acts as sacrifices ; that directs him to the Path of Meditation ; whereby reaches the Soothrathma (He on whom the worlds are strung).

9. *May be who yields the Divine Weapons protect my shoulders.* In his divine incarnation, the Bow, the Sword and the other weapons, symbolising Power, Time and

the like attributes, graced his arms. May he protect the corresponding portions of my body.

10. *May he who broke the Bow of Siva protect my arms.* When he walked on earth as a man among men, with the might of his arms he broke the bow of Siva that was no other than the mount Meru (the Axis of the world). Plainly, this places him above Siva. "When Mahadeva went against the Asuras of the Three Cities, the Earth was his car, Brahma his driver, mount Meru his bow, and Mahavishnu the point of his arrow."--*Sruthi*.

11. *May the Lord of Seetha protect my hands.* These two Mantras show us that Bala, one of the two Vidyas (occult sciences) imparted to him by Visvamithra, gave him unlimited physical strength.

12. *May he who put down Parasurama protect my heart.* Parasurama stored in himself the spiritual splendour of the Brahmana and of the Lord Vishnu. Rama put him down and destroyed the worlds won by his Thapas. This evidences what a mighty heart he had. Here is manifest the power of Athibala, the other Vidyā, in that Rama was able to accomplish superhuman acts at once. (Mantras 9, 10, 11, and 12 teach that the third manifestation of the Lord is higher than Brahma, Vishnu and Siva).

13. *May he who slew Khara protect my trunk.* Khara and the other Rakshasas constantly meditated upon the Lord, though as their mortal enemy; hence, they stand higher than many who have never bestowed a thought upon him. The Lord fails not to reward each as he deserves. He slew Khara and his Rakshasas; and that was a blessing in disguise gave them a place in his world.

14. *May he, upon whom Jambavan leant as his stay and support, protect my navel.* Jambavan sought the feet of the Lord to save himself from his dire distress; his attitude

was one of love, and not of enmity. Hence, he stands on a higher level than Khara.

15. *May the Lord of Sugreeva protect my loins.* ‘One good turn deserves another’. Sugreeva’s relations with Rama savoured more of barter than of genuine disinterested friendship. Rama served his ends first ; and Sugreeva and his monkey hosts were of use to Rama long after. Hence, he does not come up to Jambavan’s altitude.

16. *May Hanuman’s master protect my thighs.* Hanuman’s devotion to Rama was unselfish to the extreme ; humble service to his master and to the best of his might, was the only thing he prayed for. He stood nearest to the Lord’s heart. As his favourite child, he sat upon his lap. He is the ideal Bhaktha (devotee). [The last four Manthras depict the four types of those that seek the Lord during his divine incarnations].

17. *May he, who threw the bridge over the sea, protect my knees.* The Lord is the shores of the ocean of Samsara (material existence), in that he keeps back its rolling waves and is the haven of those who toil in it. May he guard my knees that form, as it were, the feet of children when they crawl about. (This teaches us that the Lord is beyond the material vehicles. He who meditates upon him thus, is freed for ever from his vehicles).

18. *May he who destroyed the ten-headed Ravana guard my ankles.* The Lord is beyond the Sookshmasareera that works through the ten organs of sense and action. To the grown-up child the ankles form the chief help in locomotion; may He guard them. (He who thus meditates upon the lord is freed for ever from the Sookshmasareera and rests in the bosom of Prakriti).

19. *May he who conferred all good and prosperity upon Vibheesana protect my feet.* He opens the gates of Joy to him who escapes the jaws of Avidya

(Nescience). May He guard my feet, the instruments of rapid locomotion. "This is the highest good. This is the highest wealth"—*Sruthi*. (This is the state of Emancipation, wherein all evil is annihilated and where supreme bliss is experienced).

20. *May Rama protect all my body.* The Lord, as the Almighty Ruler, is the monarch that shines on his Throne of Glory in the Audience Hall of the Universe. I earnestly seek to stand in his presence. May he purify my three vehicles. May he remove all obstacles and dangers on the eight-fold Path. May he, out of his grace, qualify me to find a place among the Elect.

The expression, 'Raghava,' in the first Manthra, symbolises the Universe as superimposed by Ignorance upon Brahman. The later Manthras remove this misconception. His collective and individual form is then described for purpose of meditation and Manthras 13, 18 lay down the process ; while Manthras 19 and 20 describe the destruction of evil and the realization of supreme bliss.

Hence, the Gayathri forms the germ of the Ramayana. Its 24 letters begin the 24,000 stanzas of the poem.

The Vedas form the basis of the Ramayana. Valmeeki's epic is but an amplification of the Truths taught in the Vedas ; and like the Vedas, it blesseth him that reads and him that listens to it. "The Supreme One whom the Vedas try to reach, came down on earth as Sree Rama, the son of Dasaratha ; so, the Vedas came down to where he was, as Ramayana, the child of Valmeeki's heart. So, my beloved, Ramayana is the Veda ; doubt it not, Parvathi."—*Agasthya Samhitha*.

"Valmeeki, the sage, chose the two royal youths Kusa and Lava out of many ; they were endowed with considerable

intelligence, had studied the Vedas, and their mysteries ; Ramayana, the record of Seetha's life, their mother, could not have a fitter exponent"—*V. R. I. 4.*

So, the Ramayana and the Vedic passages which it amplifies have a double aspect. The exoteric narrates the incidents in the life of Rama and Seetha. The esoteric unfolds the mystery of the Self. Let the intuitive student ponder over it. The Vedic Mantras are the deep pool, full to the brim with the Waters of Immortality. They flow through the channels of episodes on to the broad fields of Vidya, the Science of Self ; they that walk along the Path of Action, also drink of it by the way.

- Now, let us take, for example, the following Mantra, to be recited in that sacrificial rite where the two Aswins are invoked. "As a dead man leaves behind him the wealth he accumulated in his life, King Thugra cast his son into the roaring deep. But, you were there, Aswins ! ; and with numerous boats saved him and his troops." This is how the man of action would like to have it interpreted. "All the Gods and all the hymns of the Rigveda are in Him, the Supreme Self, who shines by his own light and who ever remains. He, who cannot pierce to him through these garments of sound, has very little to do with them, even in their exoteric dead letter aspect." The above vedic text affirms that the Mantras do but seek to lift somewhat of the veil that is thrown over the Nameless, whose manifestations come down to us as the presiding deities of the senses. He that has no eye for the deeper meaning has no call to study the Holy Writ. Hence, it is but just that the above Mantra should have an inner meaning. "The Self, on whom bear the burden of the past, is thrown into the ocean of Samsara (embodied existence) by the Personality that clings to material objects. Inner Ruler ! Soothrathman (Thread-Soul) ! You extend your

grace unto it ; and in the guise of the Teacher save it through the Great Sentences (Mahavakyas), that sail through the Akasa in the heart and dispel the clouds of Ignorance.

Q. It seems that the Aswinee Devas are praised in the above Mantra. Transitory objects are spoken of and as such, give no colour to the view, that the Vedas in which they are found are not composed by man.

A. Grain and the other cereals are regarded as eternal, not individually but in the type ; so, every Kalpa (life-period of Brahma), sees the divine incarnation of Rama; and as a type symbolising a kosmic event, it is eternal ; the Devathadhikarana takes this view of it. The Chamasadhikarana holds that such Mantras, though narrating past episodes, do really aim at teaching the Science of Brahman. Take the Mantra—"Aja who is red, white, and black"; here, if we give the words their natural meaning, the passage simply expresses facts of previous knowledge and forms no evidence of superphysical truths. Hence, the Teachers understand that *Aja* denotes Prakriti (differentiated matter) to whom are given such names as Splendour, the Waters and Food. Similar instances would naturally suggest themselves, of Mantras with an esoteric narrative aspect and an esoteric spiritual one underlying.

The Vedic text—"All names do but point to him. All Vedas do but describe the Supreme State" makes it plain that Sree Ramachandra is the subject of all knowledge, Vedic or otherwise. Indra and like expressions are but His names ; in fact, all words do but express His infinite qualities. But, the passages yield a narrative meaning too, as suited to the context.

Q. How can we understand expressions that denote

other gods as pointing to Rama ? If the aforesaid interpretation is made to serve our purpose, the words have no meaning of their own.

A. The various lines or dots that stand for the numerals 1, 2, 3, 4, are similar in form ; but, a difference of place makes them denote a unit or tens or hundreds or thousands. Similarly, a word or a sentence can, by association with others or by difference of context, yield many meanings. The word *Amritha* denotes naturally the Waters of Immortality obtained during the churning of the ocean. But, in the following Vedic texts—‘When this mortal man has his mind washed pure of all desire, even the least, then he becomes *Amritha* ; he attains Brahman even here ;’ “ May we drink of Soma ; May we become *Amritha* ;” “ That is man’s *Amritha* ; That is yours.” It stands for Emancipation, Godship, and offspring respectively. Or, take the text, “The Devas worship Yagna with Yagna.” Here, Yagna, the object of worship is the Supreme One ; the Jeeva is to be viewed by us as the Supreme Brahman. But, in the passage “They sprinkle the Yagna,” it means Indra, Agni and the other Devas. Again, the word denotes the sacrificial fire when it occurs in a passage about the churning of the fire. The Adhyathmika, the Adhi-Daivika and the Adhi-Bhouthika meanings stand in the relative order of their importance. The word *Indra* means literally “One who is endowed with superhuman powers.” Usage too lends its support to this interpretation. But, the passage that treats of the replacing of the Garhapatya fire uses the very same expression to denote the Garhapatya fire. Again, the expression *Akasa* can but denote naturally the material Akasa ; but in the passage “ Whatever is seen springs from the Akasa”—it denotes the Supreme One; the natural meaning is subservient to the conventional. So, we

conclude that narratives do often yield a spiritual meaning, and expressions denoting other deities do really stand for the Supreme Soul.

Q. There is a show of justice in interpreting such Mantras as do not lay down rules of sacrifice, to mean the Supreme Self, that they may not stand useless. But, what of the other Mantras that are connected with sacrificial rites? Do you contend that they too point to Rama?

A. Even so. Since the entire Vedas are devoted to that purpose alone, we have no right to except any portion of it.

Q. It is not reasonable to give such an interpretation to Mantras that are not found in sections treating of the Science of Self. Then, the passages about chopping off the branches of trees must also be interpreted to denote the Supreme Self. Then, the Karmakanda loses its value in the eyes of those who tread the Path of Action.

A. Not so. The same fact is understood variously by various grades of intelligence. A ropelying on the road is taken for a serpent by one, for a stick by another and for a rope by a third. Brahma gave out that "The person who is seen in the eye is the Athman, is Fearlessness, is Brahman." Now, Virochana, one of his auditors, understood it that the embodied self was characterised by immortality and the other attributes; but, Indra, another of them, took it that the Self transcending the vehicles was meant. Difference of intelligence sometimes accounts for difference of interpretations. Now, we read in the Maha Bharatha that Indra slew Vrithra in the body with the invisible weapon Vajra (Aswamedha Parva). "When the universe was enveloped in ignorance, the Jeeva dispelled it by Divine Knowledge that transcends the senses"—this is how the most advanced will interpret it. The Vedic text describing the Wheel of Time is interpreted as follows, to suit the intellects of a low

order. The women mentioned there stand for the deities Dhatha and Vidhatha ; the black and white threads mean day and night ; the fortnight, the month, the seasons, and the year are similarly interpreted. Now, the more advanced would see that the six seasons stand for the six senses. Each of these is made up of two months ; each sense has Desire and Aversion as its poles. A month is made up of two fortnights ; Desire and Aversion have a double aspect, according as they are directed in the direction of Dharma (the Law) or against it. Each fortnight is made up of fifteen days through the movements of the Sun and the Moon. The sun is the Self ; the moon is Manas with her sixteen rays (Prana, Sraddha, Akasa, Vayu, Agni, Water, Earth, Senses, Mind, Food, Energy, Thapas, Manthra, Karma, Worlds and Name). During sleep, the mind withdraws into itself all the rays except the last, and is absorbed in the Self. It is Avidya (Nescience), whose very nature is absolute Thamas (Inertia). The New-moon day, on which the sun and the moon are in conjunction, symbolises this truth. Later on, the rays emerge from the Self, one after another, through the agency of Viveka (Discrimination) ; this is the waxing of the Moon of Wisdom. The Self and the mind are opposite to one another, when wisdom has dawned ; the full moon typifies the disjunction of the sun and the moon. This is the Wheel of Time, the result of Action. Thus, the Manthras yield a spiritual meaning to the wise, and but the traditional one to the less advanced.

Q. If such an interpretation is the right one, how is it that Sayana and the other commentators on the Vedas have never revealed it ? Further, the incidents of the Ramayana are nowhere mentioned in the Vedic texts, like the episode of the death of Vrithra. It is hard to believe that the Ramayana is based upon the Vedas, and that all Manthras have a spiritual significance,

A. But, it is even so. The Vedic commentators set themselves to interpret the texts that bear upon the Path of Action and that sing forth the praises of the gods, in such a way as to draw the hearts of the less advanced to Action, fully aware that in course of time it will lead them on to Wisdom. The deeper meaning is not called for, and finds no place. Now, it is simply unreasonable to declare that the Ramayana incidents find no mention in the Vedas. If a blind man knocks himself against a post, is it the fault of the latter ? If you care not to delve deep into the hidden mines of Vedic lore, how is Ramayana to blame for it ? It is not in vain that the Maha Bharatha exclaims, "The Ithihasas and the Puranas amplify the Vedas ; they reveal the inner mysteries thereof. The Vedas shun the man of little wisdom, and cry out 'Lo ! this one may more likely misrepresent me.' " A room and its furniture are reflected in each mirror in it ; even so, the Universe with all its ruling Powers are reflected in each God. Everyone of them forms the cause of the world ; every one of them is the effect of the others. Worship of them is worship of Rama. The Vedic commentator interprets the texts to suit the purposes desired. But, it does not prevent us from reading into them the episodes of the Ramayana, by the force of context and by other traditional methods. We cannot accept the exoteric interpretations as ultimate, since they but plunge one deeper into the mire of Ignorance. So, we can well conclude that the Manthras bear only the traditional meaning to the uninitiated, while the initiated see in them a direct reference to Sree Rama and the mysteries connected with him.

Q. The Manthras found in connexion with religious acts do but mention the Gods, the materials, the method, the objects, and the results. How then, can you twist them to yield an interpretation in support of the Ramayana ?

A. The Manthras are even so ; but, in addition, they are invariably based upon spiritual truths. Let us take the Mantra—"You entered the great trees in the form of Krishna. Hence, I gather you in two ways." Now, this reveals the fact that the Brahman evolved the Universe and pervaded it ; and the sacrificial fuel is to be regarded as one of Its manifestations. This episode we find in the Brahmanas and is but repeated in the above text. "You, as Krishna the Supreme Brahman, evolve the universe, animate and inanimate ; and later on, pervade it through and through. You are one with it ; hence, you are even this sacrificial fuel. I now gather you thrice seven times." Again the Mantra—" We gather the earth thrown up by him, who dived into the Waters after this Earth, that lay hidden therein." The incarnation of the Lord as the Boar is referred to ; the Earth that he dug up is very sacred and should be gathered by us. Again the Mantra—" For the essence of Food and Strength,"—is used when we chop the branches of trees. The Initiate understand it to mean—"Lord of the universe ! you shine forth even in this branch you have made. I chop you off to attain supreme bliss and the level of Virat —Brahman as pervading the universe ; and I have attained to you." Texts that relate to inanimate objects should be similarly interpreted; for, *food* symbolises *Virat*, and the *Essence of food* denotes the Supreme One. ("Verily he is the Rasa, the Essence; having attained that essence, one enjoys bliss."—*Sruthi*). Besides, such vedic texts as "All this is Purusha;" "All this is the form of Brahman;" "That state which is hinted at by all the Vedas;" "That whom all these attain;" "The hymns of the Rigveda in the splendour of the changeless" are our authorities for so interpreting the Vedas. And this is possible only in the case of a careful student of the Itihisas and the Puranas, who has

mastered their inner meaning; while the less advanced sees no other meaning than the praise accorded to the gathering of the material earth and the sacrificial fuel. He who worships the physical Boar is not very spiritual nor bright; but, he who sees Sree Krishna through the veil and tries to reach him is the Initiate. However, the Vedic commentator has given an exoteric interpretation to the passage as referring to the physical food and its essence ; *that* is meant to attract those whose temperament fits them for the Path of Action. But, nothing prevents the Initiate from understanding it according to his own light.

Q. We should explain the Manthras in consonance with the religious rites in which they are to be used. But, if that meaning does not fit in with the particular act, is it not better to abandon it ?

A. No. The Manthra—" Mahavishnu crossed the three worlds in three paces"—is used in the silent recitation laid down as a penance for breaking the vow of silence, as also in the oblation of ghee as a general penance. The greatness of the Lord is the only meaning we can see here ; but, nothing authorises us to interpret it in consonance with the subject in hand. He who does not acquaint himself with the Boar and the Dwarf incarnations of Vishnu cannot explain the texts solely by their context and use. Since the Vedic commentaries aim only at attracting to the Path of Action men whose temperament lies that way, we cannot expect the episodes of the Ramayana to find a place therein. But, there is not the least shadow of doubt that the epic of Valmeeki is based upon the Vedas, since it but amplifies the truths taught in them. Men of little knowledge may find it difficult to pierce through the veil ; but to the Open Eye of the Initiate it is transparent. The Ramayana and its original, the hymns of the Rigveda, narrate the incidents in the life of Sree

Rama ; but, there runs an under-current of spiritual meaning all through. Each Manthra should be explained in relation to the sacrificial rite, to the incidents in the Rama-yana and to the Science of Self. (*Manthra Ramayana*).

XII.--How to read the Ramayana ?

There is current a quaint saying of the wise. "You cannot spend the day better than by studying the records of the gamblers in the forenoon; the stories of women and their doings form a fit theme to while away the afternoon ; and the early hours of the night form a lovely background to the adventures of the thief." Now, no one takes the above literally ; but, understands it to mean that the Bhara-tha, that narrates the gambling of the eldest of the Pandavas and the evils that resulted therefrom, should occupy the forenoon. The Ramayana of Valmeeki, whose theme is Seetha, the ideal woman, and her sorrows, is to be recited and listened to when the day draws to a close ; while, the Bhagavatha, that records in symbols the incarnation of the Supreme Purusha, Sree Krishna,—the thief who steals away our hearts—and his work among men is the best prelude one could desire to a peaceful and calm dream-life.

Valmeeki has enjoined the royal youths, Kusa and Lava, to recite just twenty chapters a day, neither more nor less. (*V. R. VII. 93*). It gives extreme pleasure to the Fathers to hear it recited, when the anniversary rites are performed in their name. Gifts of cloths cattle and gold should be made to him that reads it (*Ib. id. III*). The Coming of the Lord, the marriage of Seetha, the Installation of the Sandals, the coronation of Sugreeva, the Surrender of Vibheeshana and the coronation of Sree Rama are fitting occasions when the reciter and the expounder should be honored with liberal gifts.

XIII.—How does it benefit us ?

“This record of Rama’s life purifies the heart of men, destroys their sins, and confers supreme merit. Hence the wise hold it in equal reverence with the Holy Writ ; and he who reads it with a devout heart, is freed from sin of every kind. A long and happy life is his portion in the world of men ; and when he goes away from it, he is a welcome guest in the world of Gods and is held in high honour among them, yea, his kith and kin.

Should a Brahmana read it, gift of speech is his meed, and wisdom equalled by none. Should one of the warrior race read it, the wide Earth and all it contains owns his sway. Should a Vaisya read it, merchant princes pay homage to him ; nay, should a Soodra happen to hear it read, he shall win honor and glory among his kind.” (*V. R. I. 1.*).

Later on, we find (*Ib. id. 2*) that Brahma conferred upon Valmeeki the Open Eye of the Seer and said, “ Nothing that relates to any of the actors in that great world-drama shall escape thy all-seeing eye—Rama, Lakshmana, Seetha, men and monkeys, Gods and Rakshasas, their acts, their words, nay, their very thoughts, known or secret. Nothing that comes out of your mouth, consciously or otherwise, shall prove other than true. Sing you a poem that shall charm away the hearts of men, perfect in its rhythm and melodious in its flow. The cloud-capped mountains, the swift-coursing rivers, and all created things shall pass away and be has naught. But, your noble song shall outlive them and never fade from the hearts of men. And as long as the record of Rama’s life holds sway over the hearts of men, so long shall you sit by me in my highest heaven.”

“A rare and noble epic this, the Ramayana of honeyed verses and faultless diction, beautifully adapted

to music, vocal or instrumental and charming to hear ; begun and finished according to the best canons of the art, the most exacting critic cannot praise it too highly; the first of its kind and an unapproachable ideal for all time to come ; the best model for all future poets ; the thrice-distilled essence of the Holy Scriptures ; the surest giver of health and happiness, length of years and prosperity, to all who read or listen to it." (*Ib. id.* 4.)

" This epic confers on kings long life, fame, victory and every other blessing desired. Do you desire offspring from your loins? You fail not to get it. Is wealth your object ? You have it as much as you wish. The king triumphs over his enemies and rules the lord of the Earth. The woman that listen to this holy narrative with a heart full of devotion, rejoices in her length of days and wealth of children and grand-children, even to the seventh remove, like unto the queens of Dasaratha, who saw the Lord himself come down unto the earth as children of their loins and rejoiced in everything that this world can give and the next. Anger and her sister passions find not a place in the heart of him who listens to the words of Valmeeki. He puts away all misery behind him for ever. The wanderer in strange lands is restored to the bosom of those that love him. Sree Rama is ever ready to gratify his requests. The Shining Ones are delighted beyond measure. The evil Powers that may infest his house become his very friends and benefactors. Young women do bring forth excellent sons to gladden their hearts. Those of the royal race that listen to it with a devout heart from some good Brahmana, are ever blessed with wealth unbounded and offspring numerous. In short, an evergrowing circle of kinsmen, abundance of wealth and corn, faithful and devoted wives, perfect health, long life, fame and upright heart, spiritual splendour, good brothers and every thing that the human heart can wish for—all this

and much more form the meed of him who studies, with a pure heart and devout, the noble epic of Valmeeki."—(Ib. VI. 131).

"The sages that frequent the world of Brahma requested permission of him to go back to the audience-hall of Rama and listen to the remaining chapters of the Ramayana."—(Ib. VII, 98).

"The Omnipresent Lord and his glory form the subject of the Ramayana. Hence, the Gods, the Gandharvas, the Siddhas and the Sages ever listen to it with hearts overflowing with joy. A single chapter of the poem confers the merit accumulated by thousands of Aswamedhas, Vajapeyas and other holy sacrifices. Pilgrimages to Prayaga, Naimisa, Kurushethra and other holy spots, Ganga and the other sacred rivers—all the merit accumulated thereby is his, who listens whole-hearted to the recital of the Ramayana. The gift of untold wealth to deserving Brahmanas at Kurushethra during sacrifices confers no greater merit. The Divine Hero fails not to lift his devotee even unto his world; nay, he becomes one with the Lord."—(Ib. id. 111).

XIV.—Other Ramayanas

We have reason to believe that the life of Rama was sung by many others besides Valmeeki, even during the life time of the Divine One. "Chyavana, the sage, sang the Life of Rama. But, Valmeeki, who came after him, obtained immortal fame" (*Aswaghosha's Buddha Charithra* VII. 48.) The Ramayanas of Bodhayana, Bharadwaja and many other Rishis are not now extant.

Ananda Ramayana

The Lord Mahadeva narrated the life of Rama unto his beloved, Parvathi. It forms a portion of the Original Ramayana in 100 crores of stanzas. It is divided into 9

cantos of 109 chapters and 12,252 stanzas. The Sarakanda goes over the same ground as the Ramayana of Valmeeki. The Yathrakanda gives an account of the pilgrimage undertaken by Rama. The Yagakanda describes the horse sacrifice conducted by Rama, as also his 108 sacred names.

The Vilasakanda depicts Rama's government, the prayer known as Ramasthavaraja and the Deha Ramayana (the inner meaning of it). The Janmakanda tells us about the putting away of Seetha, the birth of Kusa and Lava, their fight with the army of Rama and the coming back of Seetha to her lord; as also the Ramaraksha. The Vivahakanda is an account of the marriages of the scions of the house of Ikshvaku. The Rajyakanda recounts the 1000 holy names of Rama, the bringing down of the trees from the heaven of Indra, the destruction of the Asura Moolaka, the conquest of the seven Dweepas and the past births of Valmeeki. The Manoharakanda contains the Laghu Ramayana (the Summary given to Valmeeki by Narada) and the Kavachas (protective mantras) of Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha, Sathrughna, Seetha and Hanuman. The Poornakanda relates the genealogy of the Lunar Race, the battle between the kings of the Soorya and Chandravamsas and the Passing of Rama.

Adhyathma Ramayana

It is generally held that this forms a part of the Brahma Purana and the printed editions confirm it. But, internal evidence shows that it was related by Visvamithra. Bhavishya Purana (III, 19) tells us that "The Lord Sankara, having thus gratified the wishes of Ramananda, vanished from the place. Later on, the holy man sought out Sree Krishna Chaitanya and served him faithfully for twelve years, subsisting solely upon milk. The Master enjoined him to compose the work known later on as the Adhyathma

Ramayana". Hence, neither Valmeeki nor Vyasa can be claimed to be its author.

As usual, Mahadeva recounts it to Parvathi. The incidents of the life of Rama are described at length, with many ethical and spiritual episodes illuminating the exoteric events.

Adbhutha Ramayana

Valmeeki narrates it to his disciple Bharadwaja. It is in 27 chapters and forms a portion of the Original Ramayana. The greatness of Seetha, the events that brought about the human incarnations of Rama and Seetha, and the episode of the thousand-headed Ravana are described at great length.

Agnivesya Ramayana

I have come across only some stanzas giving the chronology of the incidents of the Ramayana.

Sangraha Ramayana

A modern work by Narayana Panditha, a follower of Sree Madhwacharya.

Yogavasishtha Ramayana

Valmeeki narrates to Bharadwaja what took place in the audience-hall of King Dasaratha when Vasishtha initiated Rama into the Science of Brahman. The teachings lean more towards the Adwaitha philosophy of Sree Sankaracharya.

Manthra Ramayana

By Lakshmanarya—a rare and unique work. About 156 hymns of the Rigveda are selected and explained as the basis of the incidents of the Ramayana. Narada taught these very same texts to Valmeeki, who converted them later on into stanzas in the Anushtup metre;

it is a summary of the epic, and forms its first chapter—the Samkshepa Ramayana. The author interprets each Manthra narratively and spiritually, while he refers the reader to Sayana, the standard commentator, for the current explanation.

The Puranas

Every one of them narrates at some length the incidents in the life of Rama ; while the Padmapurana gives a comparative account of the same in a previous kalpa.

Raghuvamsa

By the famous poet Kalidasa. In 19 chapters he relates the prominent incidents in the lives of the Solar Kings from Dileepa down to Agnivarna.

Bhatti Kavya

By the poet Bhatti, who lived about the time of King Dharasena, of ruler Balabhi. Every one of the 22 Chapters of the work is built of words which illustrate some one important peculiarity in Sanskrit grammar.

Kamba Ramayana

By Kamban, the inspired Tamil poet. Night after night he listened to the various Ramayanas and the Puranas expounded by the ablest men of his time ; and the next day he sang them in melodious stanzas. He is the Milton of Tamil literature and his Ramayana is the Indian Paradise Lost.

Ramacharitramanasa

By Tulasidas, the famous saint of Northern India. He was the son of Athma Rama, and was born at Delhi. in 1575 A. D. He was warmly patronised by Shah Jahan, the Magnificent, and spent his life at Benares. In 1624 A. D. he went back unto Sree Rama, whose Life he

sang. He divides his work into 7 cantos like the Ramayana of Valmeeki, but the Balakanda is the longest of them. The Uttarakanda deals at length with the episode of the Crow-sage Bhusunda, and of Devotion in its manifold aspect.

It was thus the Ramacharithra came down to him. In a former kalpa, in a dark age of it, there lived a Soodra in the kingdom of Kosala. He was a bigoted worshipper of Siva and a bitter hater of other sects. A cruel famine drove him from his place to Ujjain, where a philanthropic Saivite took him in, relieved his wants and revealed to him the inner nature of Saivism and the fundamental unity of all religions. But, the past karma of the unfortunate man drove him on with irresistible force to the deeper depths of intolerant bigotry. Blinded with fanaticism, he came to regard his broad-hearted teacher as a heretic, and thought it his bounden duty to hold him up to criticism and ridicule. One day his master chanced to come into the temple where the misguided man was seated in devout meditation upon his God. Big with conceit, he rose not to salute him ; but, sat on with a look of pity and contempt upon his face. His teacher minded it not, so great was his heart and so full of pity for the erring one. But, the Lord Mahadeva could not pass over the open insult to his servant. "A serpent thou shall become" said he "and of unwieldy bulk." The Teacher, pained to the heart at this unlooked-for doom of dread, besought of the Lord to mitigate the severity of the sentence. "Nay" replied Siva "it can't be undone. But, your intercession shall preserve him from the blinding force of births and deaths. His course shall be unimpeded on earth, and he shall remember his past." Thus, the fanatic Saivite became an ardent devotee of Sree Rama ; and many were the houses of flesh he abode in. In one of them he was a Brahmana; and sought the lonely retreats of Mount Meru,

where he came upon the Rishi Lomasa. Our friend clasped his feet in reverence and prayed to be instructed in the Science of Brahman. Lomasa tried to draw his heart towards the Absolute, beyond all attributes, beyond all Name and Form. But, he felt himself out his death in it and prayed oft to be initiated into the worship of Sree Rama. Again and again he crossed the sage, who, out of patience with him, cried out, "A croaking crow thou shalt become." (We should not jump to the conclusion that Lomasa, the sage of restrained self, could not keep his temper. Far from it. He was but the mouthpiece of the karma of the man, that came to a head at that moment). But, the Brahmana had now a clearerer intellect and a calmer heart. He accepted with gladness the apparent curse as one more debt paid, as one more stone removed from the Path of Progress. Lomasa thereupon instructed him in the mysteries connected with Sree Rama and narrated unto him the Life-record of the Divine One, known as Ramacharithra Manasa. The crow passed beyond the portals of Death ; Time had no power over him. His vision was unclouded and saw far into the heart of things. Rama had not a more ardent devotee. He was the great Yogi, *Bhusunda*.

When Rama was bound by the magic weapons of Indrajith, Narada despatched Garuda, the Divine Bird, to destory them. Now, the messenger was seized with a cruel doubt—"If Rama be the Supreme Brahman, how could Indrajith or any other prevail over him ?" He prayed Narada to enlighten him on the point. Narada sent him to his Father Brahma who passed him on to Mahadeva, the supreme hierophant of the mysteries connected with Rama. But, Sankara transferred him to Bhusunda, the latest addition to the fold; and Garuda heard from the crow the Ramacharithramanasa, as also the deeper truths connected with the Lord's Illusion and doings.

One day Mahadeva happened to visit Agasthya ; and Parvathi went along with him. There they had the pleasure of listening to the life and adventures of Sree Rama as narrated by the sage. Mahadeva, struck with his extreme devotion to Rama, instructed Agasthya in the deeper mysteries of the Divine Incarnation. In the course of time, Mahavishnu came down on earth as Raghava, exiled himself to Dandaka, lost Seetha, and went in search of her with a breaking heart and woe-begone countenance. Sankara failed to meet him then, try as he would. Later on, his wishes were gratified. Bhavani, who was with him, could not refrain from exclaiming to herself, "And so this is Sree Rama—who bewails the loss of his wife like any countryman ? And this is what Sankara would persist in regarding as the supreme Brahman and the object of his worship ? Verily, Agasthya was a little too enthusiastic over his hero." Sankara warned her of her grievous mistake, and let her into the truth about Rama's incarnation. "How is it, my dear, you fail to see that all this is his delightful illusion ? He is a man now and a forlorn lover ; he cannot but play the part to perfection." But, Parvathi would not yield her point. Then, Sankara advised her to go by herself and subject Rama to any test she liked ; for, that is the only means of convincing an obstinate sceptic. Accordingly, Rudrani repaired to where Rama was and stood before him as Seetha. Lakshmana could not pierce through the illusion ; but, Rama quietly called out, "Greeting to you, sister mine ! Where have you left Sankara and what would you in these frightful solitudes ?" Parvathi was dumb-founded. Wonder, a smarting sense of defeat, shame at being found out and fear for the consequences overcame her. She went back to Paramasiva ; and Rama took the opportunity to mystify her still more. Wherever she turned, there she saw

Rama, Lakshmana and Seetha, adored by countless hosts of Gods, sages and Thrimoorthis (Brahma, Vishnu and Siva). But, when she looked back, lo ! it vanished. Sankara asked her with a smile, " Well, I hope you are satisfied. I am curious to know how you tested him." But, her evil hour was upon her still and she blurted out, " Nay, I thought better of it and tested him not. Your arguments were enough to convince me." Now, Mahadeva's heart was heavy with grief ; Parvathi could not withstand the illusion cast upon her by Rama ; and she could not keep her lips from a lie. Then, he bethought himself that she had, though for a time, assumed the guise of Seetha the Divine Mother. " No more in this incarnation shall I regard this woman as my wife ; she is a mother to me and sacred." The Gods sang his praises high, who testified his devotion to Rama by such a terrible vow. Sometime after, Parvathi came to know of it and prayed hard to be forgiven ; but Siva was in deep meditation and could not reply ; and she dragged on a miserable existence in that body of hers for about 87,000 years. At last Sankara arose from his Samadhi and the first thing he did was to recite the holy Names of Sree Rama.

Daksha's sacrificial rite, his insult to Siva, Parvathi's abandonment of her body, her re-birth as the daughter of Himavan, her prolonged austerites to become the wife of Sankara, her marriage to him, the blasting of Manmatha, and the birth of Karthikeya followed in due course. One day Parvathi reverted to the old topic and begged her husband to clear her doubt. And Sankara, out of the supreme compassion of his heart, narrated to her the Ramacharithramanasa, even as Bhusunda gave it to Garuda. The sage Yagnavalkya got it from the crow, Bharadwaja from Yagnavalkya and Thulasidas from one of his pupils.

The Jaina Ramayana

This forms the tenth chapter of the VIIth canto of the work, Thrishashti-elakapurusha-charitra, a work written in the Prakriti dialect by Hemachandracharya, the Jaina. There is very little in common between the Ramayana of Valmeeki and the Jaina Ramayana. And that is excuse enough for my giving the readers a brief summary of it.

Bharathakhanda forms one of the nine portions of Jamboodweepa, the first of the seven globes that go to make up this Earth-chain. And at Vineetha, a lovely town in it, held sway King Sagara, of the royal line of Ikshvaku. Hunting was a passion with him, to which he sacrificed his kingdom and its cares. One day he chased a deer far, far into the woods, when his horse got out of hand and took him into a strange wood that he had never before been in. Suddenly it fell dead from exhaustion ; and Sagara, faint with hunger and fatigue, trudged on wearily for a long time, until he came upon a lovely lake hidden within a thick grove. He threw himself down on its banks to rest, too tired to quench his burning thirst at the cool waters that lay to his hand. Soon he was conscious of some other presence near him, and casting his eyes in that direction, a vision of beauty dawned upon him.

A young maiden, in the prime of youth and loveliness, stood at a distance, gazing with curious eyes of fear and shyness upon the strange visitor. The grace that pervaded her form and her every movement, the dazzling radiance that enveloped her like a halo, and the stamp of nobility about her deprived him of every bit of self-control he claimed to possess ; and there he stood staring at her, like any greenhorn fresh from his fields. But, the maiden was as much at a loss to account for the strange emotions that played over

her heart and rooted her feet to the spot, perforce to gaze upon the intruder with wonder-waiting eyes. It was a case of mutual love at first sight. All at once, a call from some one near broke into the lovely dream and like a flash, the girl vanished back into the grove. Sagara, who by that time had fairly lost all consciousness of where he was, or what he was doing, was rudely awakened to a sense of reality and closed his eyes to see if he was not the victim of some strange optic illusion. When he opened his eyes, there stood before him an aged man who wore the livery of a king upon him. He bowed to Sagara with the deepest reverence and said, "Lord ! I am entrusted with a message to you which I beg to lay at your feet. It might not be unknown to you that Sulochana, of the race, ruled at Gaganavallabha, hard by the Vidyadhara Mount Vaithathy. He had two children, a boy Sahasranethra and a girl Sukesi. Poornamegha, of the same race and lord of Rathanaipura, was a suitor for the hand of the princess ; and as Sulochana would not favour his suit, the lover made war upon him, slew him in battle and annexed his kingdom. But, the God Chakrapani saved the lives of the children, and led them on to this forest, where they have lived ever since in disguise. It seems that Sukesi, the princess, saw you here. Her heart has gone out to you and she would give you her hand in marriage. Her brother (to whom you are not unknown by fame) looks upon it with supreme satisfaction and has sent me here to request you to repair to their lowly abode."

Sagara was overjoyed at this unexpected turn of events that promised to gratify the wildest hopes of his heart, and gladly followed his guide. He married Sukesi, and lost no time in leading an army against the usurper, whom he defeated with dreadful loss. Sahasranethra ruled over his father's dominions, and the lands of his foe.

Some time after, the friends made a pilgrimage to a famous shrine of Lord Jina, in a grove near the town of Saketha. As Fate would have it, Sahasranethra came upon Poornamegha, the murderer of his father and his son Ghanavahana. Blind with rage, he slew the father out of hand and was at the point of sending the son after him, when Lord Jina stayed his arm. Then, Sagara prayed of the Lord to lift the veil from the past. "What causes brought about such a deadly hatred between Poornamegha and Sulochana, between Ghanavahana and Sahasranethra ? Why should myself and Sahasranethra be drawn towards each other by feelings of strongest affection ?" Then, the Lord opened their eyes to the past, and said :—" There dwelt, of yore, at Adithyapura, a merchant by name Bhavana. He was away in other lands trading for a long time ; when, he was seized with a fit of home sickness, and travelled back as fast as he could. He left his friends and fellow-travellers far behind, and came back to his home some time after midnight. In the anxiety of his heart, he knocked loud and vehemently for admittance. But, wonderful are the ways of Fate. His son Haridasa, thus rudely roused from his deep slumbers, mistook his father for some daring dacoit, least expecting his parent's arrival at that time. He rushed out in anger, and alas! struck him dead, his poor father at his own threshold, when his heart was beating high with the anticipated delight of meeting, after so long a period of separation, those whom he loved most. But, inexorable karma could not be stayed in its course; and they were born later on as Poornamegha and Sulochana, with the old fierce animosity still ablaze in their hearts.

"A devout ascetic you were in your last birth ; and two disciples you had, Sasi and Avali. One day, they chanced to quarrel over something, and Sasi killed his friend in a fit of fury. They are no other than Ghanavahana and

Sahasranethra ; and their last thoughts still dominate their hearts. Avali was your favourite and is now your friend and kinsman."

This marvellous story, this page from the past, was listened to with deep wonder and surprise by every one present. But, none drank in the words of the Lord with greater avidity than Bheema, one of the door-keepers and a Rakshasa by descent. All at once he rushed from his place to where Ghanavahana stood, fell upon his neck with tears of joy, and cried, "In my last birth I was Vidyuthnethra, the king of Kanchanapura, and you were Rathivallabha, the son of my heart. The great gods have restored you to my arms after so long a time. But, full well do I know that my days are over, and I must quit this body. So, receive from me this diamond necklace and the arts of illusion of which I am a master. I crown you king of Lanka in the Rakshasadweepa, as also of the Pathala Lanka, six Yojanas deep below the Earth. May you live long and happily to perpetuate on earth the line of Rakshasas."

Accordingly, Ghanavahana became the ruler of the Rakshasadweepa. His son was Maharakshasa, who begat Devarakshasa. His son Keerthidhavala took to wife Devi, the daughter of Sreekantha, who ruled over Vaithathy. Thatithkesa succeeded him in the sovereignty of the Rakshasadweepa.

Meanwhile, Pushpoththara of the Vidyadhara race, and ruler of Rathanapura, had long contemplated an alliance between Devi and his son Padmoththara; but, as her father would not hear of it, he resolved to revenge himself upon him. Now, Padma his daughter, had long loved in secret Sreekantha ; who, coming to know of it, carried her away in his aerial car. Pushpoththara was beside himself with rage and was at the heels of his foe,

vowing dire vengeance upon him. But, Keerthidhavala interferred, and reconciled them ; whereafter, they became fast friends. Pushpotthara installed Sreekantha as the ruler of Vanaradweepa, where the latter made Kishkindha his capital. His son was Vajrakantha, who begat Dadhiratha.

Once, Sreechandra the wife of Thatithkesa, requested her husband to take her out for a pleasure trip in the aerial car. They went to Vanaradweepa, and had a very pleasant time of it ; when, a monkey tore at Sreechandra with his claws. Thatithkesa was so much enraged that he struck him dead on the spot. A devout follower of Jineswara the Lord of Compassion, he felt supreme remorse for having taken the life of a living thing. An ascetic happened to pass by, and the king questioned him as to his unwitting crime. The holy man's exhortations were so powerful as to arouse in his heart supreme indifference to the things of the world. He installed his son Sukesa on the throne and donned the orange-robcs of the Sanyasi. Dadhiratha, the ruler of Vanaradweepa, had a similar turn of mind and entrusting his kingdom to his son Kishkindha, renounced the world.

Meanwhile, a great Swayamvara was announced at Adithyapura, ruled over by Manthramali. On that occasion, his daughter Sreemala threw the garland of flowers around the neck of Kishkindha of the Vanaradweepa and thereby choose him out as her partner in life. Asanivega of Rathanaipura resented it as an insult to himself, fought with the successful lover and drove him out of his kingdom. Sometime after, Sukesa underwent a similar fate at his hands, when the two companions in misfortune retired to Pathalalanka with their followers, and lived a happy life there and fearless. There Indrani, the wife of Sukesa, gave birth to Mali, Sumali and Malyavan ; while Sreemala begat Adithyarajas and Riksharajas.

Mali somehow came to know that his ancestral Lanka was in the hands of the ruler of Rathanapura ; he repaired thither, drove him out of his new conquests and regained his kingdom. Later on, he marched upon Rathanapura and its ruler. Indra was then the king. His mother Chithrasundari was possessed of an evil spirit, that filled her with a strong passion for Indra, the Lord of the Celestials. Her husband came to know of it, and gladdened her heart by assuming the form of the object of her love. A son was born unto her, whom she named Indra. But, the boy did not stop there; he imitated his great name-sake in his weapons, retinue, vehicles and other signs of royalty and ruled long and well. Mali, the Rakshasa, fell in battle with him. Thereupon, the conqueror made over Lanka to Vaisravana, the son of Visravas and his wife Samseka. Then Sumali and Malyavan hid themselves in the Pathalalanka and led the life of ascetics. But, Sumali never despaired of restoring the fortunes of his house; so, he took to wife Kekasi, the daughter of Vyomabindu, by whom he had three sons Rathnasravas Bhanukarna (Kumbhakarna), Vibheeshana and a daughter Soorpanakha. The boys were endowed with extraordinary strength and might and stood over sixteen and a half bows-length in height. Rathnasravas, the eldest, one day came upon a necklace of gems that belonged to his father and lightly placed it round his shoulders. Now, its might was such that none could so much as move it an inch ; thousand deadly serpents guarded it day and night. Sumali watched that wonderful feat of his son and, struck with the reflection of the face of the boy in the nine gems, named him Dasamukha (ten-headed).

Sometime after, the young man came to hear from his mother how their house had been rulers of Lanka and the Rakshasadweepa, how they were dispossessed of it, and were leading a hole-and-corner existence down there.

as sanyasins. The spirit of his ancestors was upon him ; and he retired to the depths of Bheemaranya, from which he returned master of a thousand magical arts. He married Mandodari, the daughter of Maya of the Vidyadhara race, and had by her a son Indrajith. Six thousand Gandharva women became his wives later on. He attacked Vaisravana, drove him out of Lanka and held sway over the Rakshasadweepa with great pomp. One day, he came to know through Pavanavega that the sons of Kishkindha, the old friend of his house, was thrown into hell by Yama, a descendant of Indra of Rathanapura. He proceeded to where they were, relieved them from their misery, drove Indra from his kingdom and made Adithyayajas the ruler of Kishkindha's dominions, while Riksharajas was placed over Rikshapura in the Vanaradweepa. Adithayayajas took to wife Indumathi, by whom he had two sons Vali and Sugreeva. Riksharajas married Hari-kantha, who bore him Nala and Neela.

Reports of the mighty strength and prowess of Vali reached Dasamukha's ears ; and he proceeded forthwith to Kishkindha and his army with him. But, Vali could not understand this unprovoked attack ; so, he simply caught up the Rakshasa and placed him in durance vile. Dasamukha had ample time for reflection and repentance ; he frankly confessed to Vali that he had miscalculated and had caught a Tartar ; he prayed hard to be set free, and vowed deathless friendship and gratitude. Vali, for all his strength and valour, seems to be a good soul and soft-hearted ; and he allowed Ravana to go back in peace. Some time after, Vali installed his brother Sugreeva in his place and retired to the charming solitudes of Mount Meru to lead a life of quiet meditation. Sugreeva gave his daughter Sreeprabha in marriage to Dasamukha and celebrated it with extraordinary pomp and splendour.

Long afterwards, the Rakshasa monarch fell in love with Rathnavali, a goddess of Nithyaloka and went thither in his aerial car. All at once its course was checked; and looking down, he saw that it was Mount Meru and Vali seated there plunged in profound meditation. Fired with wrath at this insult to his majesty, he attempted to root out the mountain and Vali along with it. The monkey smiled in pity and, not disposed to be too hard upon the fool, pressed down the mount ever so much with his toe. Dasamukha could not free his hands from between the mountain and the earth. Long did he howl in his agony ; and heart-rending were his prayers and protestations to Vali, who, tired of it all, let him go. This incident gave the Rakshasa a fresh epithet—the Howler (Ravana).

Sometime after, he won the grace of Jineswara and was allowed to obtain from Dharna, the serpent, the magical art known as Sakthi. Now, the ambition to rule over the broad earth and the kings on it caught him in its grip ; and, with Sugreeva to aid him, he started on a campaign of conquest. On his way, he broke his journey at the banks of the river Narmada to bathe and rest a while. He was engaged in devout worship of Jineswara on the pleasant sands of the river, when Sahasramsa, king of Mahishmathi, kicked away the dam that kept back its waters. The rolling torrent came upon Ravana all too soon and washed away his image and the articles of worship. Ravana, beside himself with rage, attacked Sahasramsa and took him prisoner ; but, set him free at the earnest request of his father Sathabahu. Sahasramsa never recovered from the blow ; he made over his kingdom to his friend Anaranya, and took holy orders. But, the contagion spread to the new ruler, who placed his son Dasaratharaya on the throne and became a sanyasin.

During his travels, Ravana came upon king Maruththaraya, who was engaged in a grand sacrifice. Countless sheep and cattle were tied to the sacrificial posts, patiently awaiting the hour of their death and deliverance. Ravana, as a true follower of Jineswara, could not bear to see this wanton cruelty, this hecatomb of innocent animals, with no words to voice their misery but a cry. In a fit of fury, he made sad havoc of the sacrifice. Narada, who set on Ravana to this act of mercy, came there, praised the Rakshasa and his piety, and said to the assembled crowd, "There lived of yore a great teacher by name Ksheerakadamba. His son Parvathaka, the prince Vasuraya, son of Abhichandra of Sukthimathi and myself the third, were disciples under the holy man. One day, he gave us each a bird made of flour and told us to kill it where there were none present. We took different directions. The others came back after a time and described how they killed their birds and where ; but, I came back to the teacher and said, 'Reverend Sir ! Try as I would, I failed to find a place where there is none ; and further, I hold that harmlessness to all sentient beings is the highest virtue. The master was mightily pleased with me and condemned the others to long periods of life in hell. But, Parvathaka his son, wanted to know the why of it and argued the point with me. 'The Vedas enjoin on us the sacrifice of *Aja*. Now, the word has no other meaning in good honest Sanskrit than a sheep or a goat.' 'But' cried I 'the same word has been understood to denote that which is not born. Now, what can it mean, in the name of common sense, but grain that has been kept over three years ; for, then, it is useless as seed. The Vedas, ever intent upon putting down every tendency to harm any sentient being, declare that all sacrifice should be made with such grain ; that is how *Aja* should be interpereted.

Grain having the power of reproduction in it is, in a way, a sentient being ; and it must not receive harm at our hands. How absurd to apply the passages to authorise sacrifice of animals, so much higher in the scale of evolution than grain!" But, Parvathaka was hard to convince ; so, I referred the matter to Vasuraya as the umpire. He too decided it in favour of my opponent. But, the Gods, who are ever by us, were incensed at his unjust decision and condemned him to hell." The assembled multitude were loud in their praises of Narada for the masterly and lucid manner in which he had solved a very vexed question and let light upon it. Maruththaraya paid no heed to the ruin of his sacrifice ; he placed to heart the words of Narada and bestowed his daughter Kanakaprabha in marriage upon Ravana.

The Rakshasa king next proceeded to Mathura and was the guest of Madhu, who was the envied possessor of a trident given him by God Chamarendra. A warm friendship grew up between the two, and Ravana cemented it by giving his daughter Manorama as a wife to Madhu. News reached him through his spies that Nalacoobara was ruling his subjects with a rod of iron ; and Ravana proceeded there in all haste to punish the tyrant as he deserved. But, his wife Uparambha, a good woman and virtuous, interceded for him and promised that he would turn over a new leaf ; whereupon, Ravana left him in peace and turned his arms against Indra of Rathanaipura. Now, Indra had for long years kept his name untarnished, and had jealously guarded his title of 'the Invincible.' But Fate fought against him in the shape of Ravana ; and he drank of the bitter cup of defeat. Nirvanasangama, his teacher, reminded him of a past evil deed of his, when he insulted Ahalya, the wife of a holy man Anandamali ; his defeat might be, in a way, an expiation of the sin. Indra was consoled somewhat.

Thus, Ravana ranged over the earth, now winning hard victories over some and anon suffering shameful defeat at the hands of others. On his way back to Lanka, he was met by Ananthaveerya, the sage, who said to him, "Dasamukha, my son ! you have incurred much sin by violating the wives of others. A heavy punishment is in store for you through the Lord Vasudeva. You will lay violent hands on his wife, and he will be your Fate." Now, Ravana's heart sank within him, at these words of evil omen. "Well" he said to himself, "let the dead past bury itself. No use of crying over spilt milk. Henceforth at least, I shall keep my heart away from those who place not their affections on me."

There was a king, by name Mahendra, who held sway at Mahendrapura, near mount Vaithathya. He had a wife Hridayasundari and a daughter Anjanasundari. Countless were the princes that sought her hand in marriage, and sent their horoscopes and portraits to her father. Mahendra consulted with his ministers, and chose Vidyuthprabha and Pavananjaya as the best of the lot. Now, Vidyuthprabha was the master of unbounded wealth, was extremely proficient in all the arts and sciences of the time, and was gifted with marvellous beauty; but, the stars promised him a very short life. Pavananjaya, the son of Prahladaraya, who reigned at Adithyapura, was not endowed with such excellences as his rival ; but, the astrologers guaranteed him a very long life.

Naturally, the father chose the latter as a meet husband for his girl, fixed the day of marriage and sent word to his friends and kin that he would celebrate it at a town near the holy spot Manasatheerththa. Well, they assembled there in due course, and the preliminary rites were conducted with magnificent pomp. Pavananjaya was no fool. He knew very well that the choice fell upon him not because he was

a more eligible party than his rival, but because his life was an unusually long one. He could not repress the natural curiosity to know how his affianced took it, how the king and his people viewed it. He managed to conceal himself in the apartments of the princess, with a view to hear for himself what they thought of the match. Anjanasundari and her two friends touched upon various current topics for a time; when, one of the girls turned to the other and said, "I cannot, for the life of me, make out why our master should pass over Vidyuthprabha, the most beautiful and wealthy of all the princes we know, and pitch upon Pavananjaya as a husband for our princess. May be you are in the secret." "Nay, nay" replied the other "there is nothing in it to make a secret of. Vidyuthprabha has but a short life before him ; and Pavananjaya has an unusually long one. At least that is what the astrologers give out. That is all." "What a pity !" rejoined the first "Better a short life and sweet than a long one and dreary. A cup of nectar and—death the next moment, is what I would prefer to unending draughts of poison and—a lease of life, longer if possible than that of Father Time."

But, Anjanasundari quietly listened to it as became a dutiful daughter. Her face was as inscrutable as a sphinx ; nor did she chide her maids for taking that extraordinary liberty with her and the object of her father's choice. Pavananjaya unfortunately jumped to the conclusion that the princess accepted him not for his own sake ; his only recommendation was that the astrologers guaranteed him a very long life. He was the last man to make a scene. His friends, his kin and the guests shall never come to know the great sacrifice he made for their sake. He would go through the affair as if he were the most ardent of lovers; but, Anjanasundari must be a stranger to him for the rest of his life. Well, the marriage came off as grandly as any one could wish.

Pavananjaya took his bride home to his capital, gave her a splendid suite of apartments, numerous retinue and every comfort that heart could desire ; but, he never set his eyes upon her.

Ravana the Rakshasa, sustained shameful defeat at the hands of Varuna and sent word to his friend Prahladaraya to come and lead his troops against the foe. Pavananjaya caught at the opportunity to escape from a cheerless home. His parents and wife did their very best to detain him ; but he heeded them not. He travelled far during the day and encamped at night on the shores of Lake Manasarovara. It was insufferably hot and sultry. Nature seemed to hold her breath in pain. Pavananjaya rolled on an uneasy bed, listless and too tired to sleep. A swan sent up from somewhere near a doleful wail, calling upon her mate that came not. It aroused in the prince a train of thought, that unconsciously led him to reflect upon the life of happy couples, of love-matches, and of the course of true love that did run smooth. His mind had been under a cloud, and his heart warped and unnaturally perverted. What a brute he had been! And what an angel of goodness and patience his wife had proved herself! His unbounded self-conceit had certainly misconstrued her maiden modesty and silence, into a loveless heart and utter apathy. Well, he was glad that he had found out his mistake before it was too late. Not a moment should be lost in making ample reparation, even to the fullest. So, he took horse at once, and, before midnight, was at the gates of his palace unknown to any. He sought the presence of his wife ; and, to her great surprise and bewilderment, confessed everything frankly and honestly, and besought her to pardon him and forget the past if possible. They had a very happy time of it that night ; and in the small hours of the morning

Pavananjaya took leave of his wife, promising to be back as early as possible. As a sign of his visit to her that night, and to silence any scandal in case she conceived and bore him a child, he gave her his signet ring and rode back in all speed to the camp.

Anjanasundari did conceive and it came to the ears of the king and queen. They would not listen to any explanations. They would not bestow a glance at the signet ring she produced. They would not heed the advice of their prudent minister to take no action until their son should come home. The unfortunate girl was made to leave the capital the very next day. Her parents were, if possible, more stupid and pig-headed. "You do not want us to believe that they are fools enough to punish an innocent girl. *Here* is no place for you."

Now, the princess had a very dear friend of hers, by name Vasanthathilaka. She sought her out and requested shelter and help from her when her hour of pain and misery should come upon her. For once, the tie of friendship was stronger than the tie of blood. A loving heart saw more clearly than Age and crabbed Prejudice. She consoled the heart-broken girl and assured her that she would see her through at any cost. They left the abodes of men far behind and repaired to the wild woods, travelling by easy stages, and subsisting on the kindly charity of those they came across. At last they reached Hanupura, a sort of oasis in the midst of a dense forest, and put up for themselves a sort of cottage near the hermitage of Amithagathi, a holy man. One morning Vasanthathilaka approached him and asked, "Holy sir! What will become of my poor friend? The child in her womb—has it happy days before it?" And to her replied the sage, "In her last birth this lady was Lakshmeevathi, one of the two queens of Kanakaratha. She

hated her rival, and in sheer spite, stole the image of Jineswara that she worshipped, and threw it on a heap of rubbish. But, repentence came upon her soon. She brought back the image and prayed to the Lord to pardon her sacrilege. That is why she was hounded out by her kith and kin. Her timely repentance will bear ample fruit, in that a son would be born unto her ; and great will be his fame in all the worlds. The cloud that now darkens her fair name will soon pass away and she will be taken back with joy and honor by the very people who have discarded her."

Shortly after, Anjanasundari gave birth to a son. It was a Sunday in the month of Chaithra and the constellation Sravana ruled the day. *Hanumantha* they called him, from Hanupura, where he was born. Mighty were his feats and marvellous his deeds even as a child ; and the fame of his strength and prowess flew far and fast. One morning he saw the rising Sun and mistaking it for a nice plaything, sprang into the air to bring it down. But, he found out his mistake and alighted on mount Sreesaila, which was shattered to pieces through the shock.

Meanwhile, his father Pavananjaya made war upon Varuna, routed his army and delivered from captivity Khara and Dooshana, the brothers of Ravana. Thereafter, he returned to his kingdom, covered with glory and loaded with honors and presents by the Rakshasa king. A terrible shock awaited him at home. His wife, his new-found love, was mercilessly driven from the town by his own parents, who ought to have known better—and all because she had born in her womb the happy pledge of their reunion after long years of desolate misery. They might have at least waited for him to come back ; *he* had a voice in the affair ; *he* had more vital interests at stake. He called the people together and related to them how he had cruelly misunderstood his innocent wife, how happy Fate

brought them together, how he provided against that very contingency and how his parents were obstinately blind to the truth and had perpetrated an unheard-of cruelty. His house was left unto him desolate. His heart was far away and with his wife. He had no call to remain where the persecutors of his wife abode. He would go out into the world and search even to the remotest corners of it, even if the search should end with his life. Long did he wander and far did he roam, until at last one happy day he came upon them at the outskirts of Hanupura, living all humbly. He clasped his dear wife and dearer child to his breast. Vasanthathilaka, a mother to the poor girl when her own flesh and blood cast her out with scorn—he could not thank her enough nor think of any return of gratitude, except humbly praying her to live with him all her days and continue to be a mother to himself and his wife. They came back to his kingdom and lived there long and happily.

Hanumantha rendered signal service to Ravana the Rakshasa, who, out of a heart full of gratitude and delight, gave him to wife his daughter Sathyavathi. His sister Soorpanakha was not less grateful and bestowed her daughter Ananthakusuma upon him. On his way back, Sugreeva and Nala invited him to stay with them, and coming to know of the great service rendered by him to their old friend Ravana, gave him their daughters Padmaraga and Harimalini to wife.

King Vijaya ruled at Ayodhya. Himachooda was his wife and he had two sons Vajrabhahu and Purandara. The elder took Manorama to wife ; but, after a time, they entered the order of the monks. The younger came to the throne, and after him, father and son, Keerthiratha, Kosala, Hiranyagarbha, Nahusha, Saudana, Simharatha, Brahmaratha, Chathurmukha, Hemaratha,

Satharatha, Vathayapritha, Varidhara, Indudhara, Adithy-ratha, Mandhatha, Veerasena, Prathimanya, Prathibandhu, Ravimanyu, Vasanthalethaka, Kuberadaththa, Kumku, Sarabha, Dwiratha, Simhadasava, Hiranyakasipu, Punjasthala, Kakuthstha, Raghuraya and Anaranya. His son Dasaratha reigned at Ayodhya long and happily. King Janaka of Mithila was his contemporary and faithful friend.

One day Ravana met Narada, and asked him in a spirit of banter, "Now, tell me when I am to die and by whom ?" To whom Narada replied, "The son of Dasaratha, King of Ayodhya and the daughter of Janaka of Mithila are your Fate." Ravana was dumb-founded at this unexpected turn of the conversation. Narada had taken him all too seriously and had spoken out a very unpleasant prophesy. But, he would cheat Destiny and give the lie to Narada ; he would make it utterly impossible for Dasaratha and Janaka to have any children at all ; he would lay them out as corpses and there was an end of it. So, he sent his brother Vibheeshana to make away with them ; but, they had word of it before hand and were far away by the time their enemy was upon their city. Vibheeshana executed the orders of Ravana upon the life-like images that the kings had left on their throne and reported to his brother that the objects of his apprehension were no more.

Meanwhile, Dasaratha travelled a long way and settled in the Magadha country with his wives Aparajitha, Sumithra, Kaikeyee and Suprabha. In a battle with an enemy who attacked him wantonly, Kaikeyee rendered him signal service and in return got from the king two boons, which she reserved for some future occasion to ask. Dasaratha had four sons. One night Aparajitha, his eldest wife, saw in her dreams a lion, an elephant, the sun and the moon. The astrologers interpreted it that she would give birth to a son whose fame would

spread over the whole world. Shortly after, a son was born to her, as beautiful as the Goddess Lakshmi who dwells in Brahmaloka. He was an incarnation of one of the gods. They named him Padma, from the lotus on which Lakshmi sits; Rama was another of his names. The second wife likewise dreamt of a lion, an elephant, the sun, the moon, the fire, the ocean God and Lakshmi. A son was born to her, blue in hue, overshadowed by Mahavishnu. They called him Narayana and also Lakshmana. The third wife, Kaikeyee, begat Bharatha, and Suprabha was the mother of Sathrughna. About the same time, Janaka married Vaidehi and had a daughter, Seetha by name.

Later on, Atharangama, the Mlechcha king over Mayuramala, the capital of Barbaradesa, north of mount Kailas, attacked Janaka, who requested his friend to assist him. Rama obtained permission to go instead of his father and defeated the enemy. This induced Janaka to give him his daughter Seetha to wife. Now, Narada came to hear of the extraordinary beauty of the princess and repaired to the house of Janaka to have a sight of her. But, Seetha was horribly frightened at his monstrous ugliness and would not come forth. Stung to the quick, Narada induced King Bhamandala to abduct Seetha. But, his father Chandragathi stopped it and sent word to Janaka to give Seetha in marriage to his son. "What a pity!" exclaimed Janaka "I have already promised her hand to Rama." But, Chandragathi would not drop the matter there. 'Such a gem of a woman shall never be the prize of pure luck ; worth, merit and valour must have a voice in it too. I will send you a famous bow, Vajravartha. Should Rama succeed in so much as bending it, Seetha shall be his.' Janaka acceeded to the proposal and invited Rama to fulfil the conditions. It was but child's play for the hero ; and Seetha became his wife,

Lakshmana married eighteen maidens of the Vidyadhara race ; and Bharatha married the daughter of Janaka's brother.

Thereafter, Dasaratha was enabled to regain, through the grace of Jineswara, his lost kingdom of Ayodhya. But, the snows of age chilled his heart and he resolved to install Rama in his place. It was then that Kaikayee came forward and requested him to fulfil his promise unto her. "With the greatest pleasure" replied Dasaratha. "Then," said Kaikayee "send away Rama to the distant forests and place my son Bharatha on the throne." Dasaratha, whose heart knew no deceit, whose lips were never soiled by an untruth, bowed his head in sorrow and consented to condemn to long exile the darling of his heart. Bharatha went on his knees to Rama and besought him to remain at Ayodhya and accept the throne as his lawful right. But, Rama took an example from his father and was bent upon going away from the kingdom. The old monarch had, without a moment's hesitation, sacrificed his life and every thing that it could offer him on the altar of Truth and Duty. Would he, the son of such a noble father, tarnish by his weakness for power the bright fame of his ancestors that shone far far into the illimitable past ? His father's promise, of which the price was his life, should be kept in full.

Rama, Seetha and Lakshmana travelled long and far, and at last entered the dense forests of Pariyathra. They passed by mount Chitrakoota and many days' journey from it, came upon a town where they found no living soul. Rama called unto him a hunter that stood by, and asked him the reason of it. "Lord!" said the man "this is or this was the famous town of Dasanga. Vajrakarni, a petty ruler, governed here with great fame and justice. He was a devout follower of Jineswara; he cut his image on his signet and vowed

that he would never bow his head to any other, god or man. This reached the ears of Simhadasa, his lord and master, who came down upon him with a large army, drove him and his subjects from the town and reduced it to the state you now see it in." Rama was extremely pained to hear it. He directed Lakshmana to punish Simhadasa for his wanton injustice and brought about a better understanding between him and Vajrakarni. This enabled the latter to devote himself heart and soul to the worship of Lord Jina.

Thereafter, they dived deeper and deeper into the dark woods and one day came upon a lovely princess wandering about in man's attire. They consoled her and came to know that her father king Valakhilya was defeated and kept in prison by Kaka, a hunter-king. Rama sent Lakshmana to slay Kaka and free Valakhilya from bondage.

Another day, they travelled far and suffered much from heat, hunger and fatigue. A large banyan offered them a welcome refuge under its pillared shade. A Yaksha, who had made the tree his home, came down and offered reverent worship to Rama and through his magic, a beautiful town arose on the spot, where the exiles lived for a time.

One day, Rama reached the town of Vijayapura and was sauntering through the lovely gardens on the outskirts, when he saw a beautiful girl about to put an end to her life. He ran to her and succeeded in thwarting her purpose. " My good sister ! How could you ever think of going into the presence of your Maker unbid and before your time ?" " Lord !" replied the maiden, in accents of bitter despair, " doubtless you rejoice in having saved my life and regard it as a great benefit done to me ; but, if you knew what misery I was trying to escape from, you would have been the first to kill me out of sheer pity " ; and she burst into a flood of tears, Rama

blamed himself for having caused her useless grief and resolved to lighten her load of sorrow, if that were in his power. "Grieve not, my child ! Tell me what your heart yearns after ; and you *shall* have it." Then she took heart and said, "He who stands by your side, your brother Lakshmana, is the cause of all my woe. Mine is a hopeless love unreturned. Better dark death than a life of dire misery, a living hell. Now, see you not that your promise is beautifully fulfilled?" and she laughed out of very bitterness. Rama turned to Lakshmana and said, "My dear, you see that this lady is endowed with no ordinary attractions of mind and body ; she has set her heart upon you ; and I have passed my word to see her happy—which you never knew me to break. So, it would give me infinite pleasure to see you take this worthy maiden to wife." Lakshmana, to whom his brother's word was law, raised the poor girl from the depths of hopeless despondency to the highest pinnacle of joy and delight. She was to remain with her parents until they came back to take her to Ayodhya.

On their way, they came to know that Athiveerya, king of Nandavartha, was working up a conspiracy against his master and over-lord Bharatha ; and Rama punished him as he deserved.

Another time, they stayed at a town named Kshemanjali, where Lakshmana married princess Jithapadma. Two Brahmanas that lived in the mountain valleys sought his feet and were raised by him to the highest heavens.

Then, they came to the Dandakaranya, so named after Danda, the king, who took birth there as a bird to expiate his sins. Rama took pity on the poor creature and transformed him into Jatayus, a sacred bird.

Sambooka, the son of Khara and Soorpanakha, was undergoing severe austerities in a bamboo grove on the banks of

the Krounchapa. The famous sword Chandrahasa, of magical powers, was what he wanted to get. Lakshmana decided that his success would considerably endanger the safety of the world, and slew him with the very sword he was trying to get. Soorpanakha was inexpressibly pained to hear of it and complained to Rama in no mild terms. She came more than once on that errand. Rama's divine beauty enslaved her heart and she overcame a woman's sense of modesty to beseech him to marry her. But, Rama spurned her away from him as a loathsome thing, whereupon, she set her husband upon Rama and Lakshmana, who she swore had offered her deadly insult. Khara, blind with jealous rage, came upon them with a large army. Lakshmana asked Rama to take care of Seetha while he went forth to fight the Rakshasa hosts. Then, Ravana took the opportunity to do his sister Soorpanakha a favour. He concealed himself behind the hermitage of Rama, and called upon him in the voice of Lakshmana to save him from death at the hands of his enemies. Seetha at once concluded that Lakshmana was in deadly peril. She lost not a moment in sending Rama to his assistance. Finding her alone and unprotected, the Rakshasa king pounced upon her and carried her to his island home in Lanka, where he placed her in the Asoka grove under the guard of fierce-visaged Rakshasis. He tried all his arts of persuasion ; he threatened her with horrible tortures and a lingering death too painful to conceive; he offered her his untold wealth and unbounded power; his wife Mandodari was induced to plead for him with all a woman's logic. But, Seetha grew more and more bitter towards Ravana and openly scoffed at him, his barbarous splendour, his wild ways, and his unbounded wickedness. Vibheeshana tried his utmost to save her from his persecutions. But, Ravana turned a deaf ear to all remonstrances and well-meant advice.

Rama and Lakshmana annihilated Khara and his forces and returned to their hermitage, intending to have a good laugh at Seetha for her wild fears for the safety of Lakshmana. But, they found their home desolate ; search as they would, they came not upon Seetha, nor could anybody thereabouts give them the least news about her.

King Viratha complained to Rama and Lakshmana of the cruel treatment he had endured from Khara and Dooshana ; Lakshmana freed him for ever from his tormentors and gave him the kingdom of Pathala Lanka to rule. He, out of the great gratitude of his heart, sent messengers faithful and cunning, north and south, east and west to bring him news of Seetha—but all in vain.

Sugreeva, king of the Vanaradweepa, had a wife, Thara by name, of matchless beauty and intelligence. Sahajathi fell in love with her and taking advantage of the absence of her husband, assumed his shape and proceeded to her apartments. But, as Fate would have it, the real Sugreeva came upon the scene all too unexpectedly. There was a terrible fight beteen Sugreerva and his counterfeit, in which the latter had the best of it. Sugreeva took refuge with Rama and laid before him his tale of wrong and suffering. Rama divined the truth in a moment, slew out of hand the pretender and restored Sugreeva to his kingdom and to his wife. The grateful king vowed never to rest, until he had discovered the whereabouts of Seetha.

Viratha and Bhamandala sent word to their friend Rama, that the wife of his heart was kept in durance vile at Lanka by the infamous Ravana. Sugreeva sent his monkey hosts to Lankadweepa to search it through and through. Hanumantha was entrusted with Rama's signet to watch over Seetha in her hour of peril ; and the ring was to be his credentials.

The valiant Hanumantha crossed over to Lanka, interviewed Vibheeshana and through his help, managed to penetrate into the garden Devaramana, where Seetha was kept in close confinement. She was there, seated under an Asoka tree, her heart sore with grief and her thoughts full of Rama, whom she expected every moment to come to her. Hanumantha declared himself unto her as a trusted messenger from her lord, produced the signet and acquainted her with the whereabouts of Rama and what he passed through on her account. Joy illumined the heart of the poor forlorn wife. She kissed over and over the priceless ring that was to her an embodiment of her beloved; blessed Hanumantha as her deliverer from a fate worse than a thousand deaths ; and gave him in return her own crest-jewel to be taken back to Rama, with an oft-repeated prayer to come on the wings of speed to Lanka and free her from the clutches of the vile Rakshasa.

Now, Hanuman would not go back without giving Ravana some tangible proof of his having been at Lanka, something to remember him by ; he managed to destroy a large section of the royal army and finished up with sending Aksha, the favourite son of Ravana and a very famous general, to where his forefathers had gone before him. But, something remained to be done. He must meet the woman-stealer face to face, and have it out with him after his own way. So, he allowed himself to be bound by the magical serpent-bonds, and was taken before the king. There he brake them as so many wisps of straw ; roundly rated Ravana for his evil life and his countless iniquities ; and in the end, shattered to pieces the diadem of the proud monarch. He sprang away over the heads of those that stood around him, destroyed many of the fortifications of the town and was back to the mainland, leaving Ravana

and his Rakshasas utterly dazed with fear and confusion. He laid before Rama a harrowing tale of Seetha's woe, of her fortitude, of her brave defiance of Ravana and his might, of her oft-repeated prayer to be freed from that den of crime ; and produced Seetha's crest-jewel to confirm his statements.

Rama, Lakshmana, Sugreeva, Hanumantha, Bhaman-dala and the monkey hosts marched upon Lanka in hot haste. Samudra and Sethu, two friends of Ravana, barred their way, whom Nala and Neela put to rout. Suvela and Hamsadhara met with no better fate when they tried to oppose their march. At last they approached Lanka and besieged it. Meanwhile, Vibheeshana after one more hopeless attempt to turn Ravana's feet from the path of wickedness, went over to Rama with his army and promised signal assistance during the coming battle. Then, the two armies closed in deadly fight. Ravana sent forth his magical serpent-weapons to bind the monkey host, and render Rama utterly powerless. But, Lakshmana thought of his conveyance, the bird Garuda, who speedily appeared upon the scene, and made short work of the serpents. Rama caused a dreadful carnage among the Rakshasa hosts, and victory was almost within his reach. Now, Ravana came upon the battlefield, and recognising that Lakshmana was the most powerful of his foes, hurled upon him a magical weapon, Sakthi by name, that he had reserved against his dread enemy. Lakshmana respected the convention that the Sakthi ought not to be fought against ; he quietly allowed himself to be bound and lay as one dead. But, Bhamandala divined his purpose ; and in a flash, he was off to mount Drona, from where he brought the Waters of Life. Rama dashed it over his brother, who rose as from a deep sleep. Then, Lakshmana, who had all along been waiting for the moment

that would end the life of Ravana, mentally called unto himself his Discus. It came, and severed the head of the Rakshasa king from his body. Vibheeshana begged hard of Lakshmana to accept the sovereignty of the Lanka-dweepa; but, in return, he himself was crowned king of it by his noble benefactor. Kumbhakarna, brother to Ravana, and Indrajith, his eldest born, were made rulers of other kingdoms.

Sixteen days they stayed at Lanka, most hospitably entertained by Vibheeshana, whose joy and gratitude knew no bounds. Thereafter, they travelled back to Ayodhya in the famous aerial car Pushpaka. Bharatha and Sathrughna met them some way from the capital; and a touching sight it was to see the brothers meet again after so many years of separation, danger and trouble. Bharatha formally and with a full heart made over the kingdom to Rama, its lawful ruler, of whom he was, as he declared, but the faithful Viceroy. "He had had enough of worldly life" he said and passed away into the silent woods, there to hold communion with the Supreme. Kaikeyee, who had ample time for reflection and repentence, was heartily ashamed of her meanness and followed her son to his calm retreat. Rama was duly installed on the throne of Ayodhya. He placed Sathrughna over Madhurapuri ; gave the Rahshasadweepa to Vibheeshana; Sugreeva was to rule over the Vanaradweepa ; Hanumantha held sway at Sreepura ; Viratha was rewarded for his faithful service with the vast dominions of Pathalalanka; Hanupura, where Hanuman was born, was placed in charge of Neela ; Vaithadya and Rathanaipura fell to the lot of Bhamandala, the true friend. Thus, Rama remembered those that had befriended him in his adversity and stood by him through peril and danger. They were loaded with honors and presents, and went back to their respective kingdoms in great joy.

Rama ruled over Ayodhya long and well; and Seetha, Prabhavathi, Rathinibha and Sreedama were his queens. Lakshmana divested himself of all cares of state, and lived a peaceful life of domestic felicity in the company of his wives Visalya, Rupavathi, Vanamala, Kalyanamalika, Rathnamalika, Jithapadma and Manorama and the two hundred and fifty children born unto them.

Dasaratha Jathaka.

It forms one of the Birth-stories of Lord Buddha and is written in Pali prose. It confines itself to the first part of Rama's adventures, and his wanderings in the forest and ends with his marriage to Seetha. But, the most curious thing about it is that Rama is represented as the brother of Seetha. A verse from chapter 128 of the Yuddhakanda is found in it.

OTHER WORKS ON THE SUBJECT

POEMS

1. *Sethu-bandha* :—A poem written in the Prakritha dialect by Pravarasena. Dandi refers to it in his Kavyadarsa, I, 34.

The central episode is Rama's laying a bridge across the sea that separates Lanka from the mainland.

2. *Champu Ramayana* :—in five cantos by Bhoja Raja. It is a prose work interspersed with beautiful poetry.

3. *Raghava-bhyudaya*

4. *Raghava-pandareeya*:—by Kavi Raja. It is so worded that it may apply equally well to the adventures of Rama or the Pandavas, being in fact an epitome of the Ramayana and the Mahabharatha.

5. *Raghava-vilasa* :—by Visvanatha, the author of Sahithyadarpana.

6. *Rama-vilasa*:—by Ramacharana.

7. *Ramavilasa*:—by Harinatha. It is written on the model of the Geetha Govinda of Jayadeva,

8. *Ramachandra-charithra-sara* :—by Agnivesa.
9. *Raghunatha-bhyudaya*.
10. *Raghava-naishadheeya* :—by Hara-daththa-soori.
11. *Ramayana-manjari* :—by Kshemendra.
12. *Ravanarjuneeya* :—by Bhatta Bheema.

DRAMAS

1. *Mahaveera-charithra* and *Uttara Rama-charithra*:— by Bhavabhoothi, dealing respectively with the incidents in the Poorvakanda and the Uttarakanda of the Ramayana.

2. *Hanuman-nataka* or *Maha-nataka*:—It is said to have been composed by Hanuman, who wrote it on rocks. Later on, Valmeeki sung his marvellous poem ; and lest it should be thrown into the shade, the faithful devotee of Rama cast *his* stanzas into the sea. Long long after, in the reign of Bhoja Raja, some portions of them were recovered and arranged by Damodara-misra. It is written in fourteen acts, and some of the stanzas are veritable gems of Sanskrit literature.

3. *Anargha-raghava*:—in seven acts by Murari.
4. *Prasanna-raghava*:—by Jayadeva.
5. *Abhirama-mani* :—in seven acts by Sundara-misra.
6. *Bala-ramayana* :—by Rajasekhara.
7. *Udaththa-raghava*.
8. *Unmaththa-raghava* :—by Bhaskara-kavi.
9. *Chalitha-rama*.
10. *Doothangada* :—by Subhata.
11. *Fanakee-charana-chamara* :—by Sreenivasacharya.
12. *Fanakee-parinaya* :—by Ramabhadra Deekshitha.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

	PAGE
Valmeeki and Narada	1
CHAPTER II.	
How Valmeeki came to compose the Ramayana	16
CHAPTER III.	
How the Ramayana was composed	21
CHAPTER IV.	
Kusa and Lava sing the Ramayana before Rama	25
CHAPTER V.	
Ayodhya	29
CHAPTER VI.	
Dasaratha	32
CHAPTER VII.	
Dasaratha's ministers	36
CHAPTER VIII.	
A childless king	38
CHAPTER IX.	
Rishyasringa, the innocent	40
CHAPTER X.	
Rishyasringa, the innocent (<i>continued</i>)	42
CHAPTER XI.	
Dasaratha and Rishyasringa	45
CHAPTER XII.	
The horse-sacrifice resolved upon	48

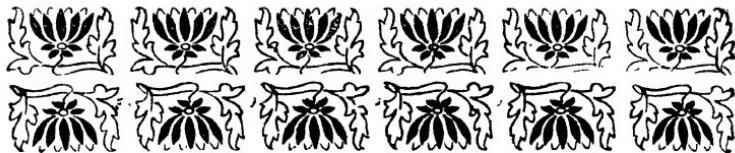
	CHAPTER XIII.	PAGE
The horse-sacrifice begun	50
	CHAPTER XIV.	
The horse-sacrifice (<i>concluded</i>)	53
	CHAPTER XV.	
The gods take refuge with the Lord	58
	CHAPTER XVI.	
The Divine Payasa	61
	CHAPTER XVII.	
The coming down of the gods	64
	CHAPTER XVIII.	
The Coming of the Lord	67
	CHAPTER XIX.	
Visvamithra asks Rama of Dasaratha	72
	CHAPTER XX.	
Dasaratha's reply	74
	CHAPTER XXI.	
Vasishtha advises Dasaratha to send Rama	77
	CHAPTER XXII.	
Rama and Lakshmana go with Visvamithra	80
	CHAPTER XXIII.	
Kamasrama	83
	CHAPTER XXIV.	
Thataka's lair	86
	CHAPTER XXV.	
Thataka	89
	CHAPTER XXVI.	
The fall of Thataka	91

	CHAPTER	PAGE
The Gift of Visvamithra ...	XXVII.	94
CHAPTER XXVIII.		
The mystery of the Recall ‘
CHAPTER XXIX.		
Vamana and Bali
CHAPTER XXX.		
Visvamithra's sacrifice
CHAPTER XXXI.		
The trip to Mithila
CHAPTER XXXII.		
Kusanabha
CHAPTER XXXIII.		
Brahmadaththa
CHAPTER XXXIV.		
Visvamithra's ancestry
CHAPTER XXXV.		
Ganga and Uma
CHAPTER XXXVI.		
Uma's curse
CHAPTER XXXVII.		
The birth of Karthikeya
CHAPTER XXXVIII.		
Sagara
CHAPTER XXXIX.		
Sagara's horse-sacrifice
CHAPTER XL.		
The wrath of Kapila

	CHAPTER XLI.	PAGE
Amsuman's quest 125
CHAPTER XLII.		
Bhageeratha's penance 127
CHAPTER XLIII.		
Descent of Ganga 129
CHAPTER XLIV.		
The end of the quest 132
CHAPTER XLV.		
The churning of the Ocean 134
CHAPTER XLVI.		
The birth of the Maruths 137
CHAPTER XLVII.		
The birth of the Maruths (<i>continued.</i>) 139
CHAPTER XLVIII.		
Ahalya 141
CHAPTER XLIX.		
Ahalya and Rama 143
CHAPTER L.		
At Mithila 147
CHAPTER LI.		
Visvamithra's visit to Vasishtha... 149
CHAPTER LII.		
Vasishtha welcomes Visvamithra 152
CHAPTER LIII.		
" Give me the Cow of Plenty " 153
CHAPTER LIV.		
Sabala fights 156

	CHAPTER		PAGE
Vasishta and Visvamithra	LV. 158
CHAPTER LVI.			
Brahmana <i>versus</i> Kshathriya 161
CHAPTER LVII.			
Thrisanku 163
CHAPTER LVIII.			
The royal Chāndala 165
CHAPTER LIX.			
Visvamithra champions Thrisanku 169
CHAPTER LX.			
The triumph of Visvamithra 172
CHAPTER LXI.			
Ambareesha 176
CHAPTER LXII.			
Visvamithra saves Sunassepha 178
CHAPTER LXIII.			
Visvamithra and the Siren 180
CHAPTER LXIV.			
Visvamithra and Rambha 183
CHAPTER LXV.			
Visvamithra, the Brahmarshi 185
CHAPTER LXVI.			
The Coming of Seetha 189
CHAPTER LXVII.			
The broken bow... 191
CHAPTER LXVIII.			
Dasaratha invited to Mithila	.., 193

	CHAPTER LXIX.	PAGE
Janaka and Dasaratha 195
CHAPTER LXX.		
The Race of the Sun 197
CHAPTER LXXI.		
The line of Janaka 200
CHAPTER LXXII.		
The Godana 202
CHAPTER LXXIII.		
The wedding 205
CHAPTER LXXIV.		
Rama of the Axe 207
CHAPTER LXXV.		
Rama and Rama 210
CHAPTER LXXVI.		
The biter bit 211
CHAPTER LXXVII.		
Back to Ayodhya 216



BĀLAKĀNDĀ

CHAPTER I

VALMĪKI AND NĀRADA

LONG, long ago, when the world was yet young, and the Trētā yuga was nearing its end, there lived a sage, by name Vâlmîki. His knowledge of the Vêdas and the Vêdângas was deep and profound. He had trod the Fourfold Path that leads to Liberation and discharged the duties of his place in life to their utmost. He had the fleeting senses under perfect control and the mind, their wayward Monarch. And unto him, in his holy hermitage, came Nâradâ, one fine morning, Nâradâ, the divine sage, Nâradâ, the best and foremost of the mind-born sons of Brahma. His long life had been spent in unselfish prayer and devout meditation ; the bonds of Karma and material existence were to him a thing of the past ; he knew no other joy than to contemplate the countless perfections of the Lord of All and the deeper mysteries of the Holy Writ ; and from his Viñâ, Mahatî, he drew forth such strains, as held enthralled the hearts of all, gods and men, to the accompaniment of which he sang the praises and the glory of the Great Father, as embodied in the hymns of the Sâma Vêda. Very few equals had he in the art of speech ; so clever and so convincing was he.

And to him who came there, impelled by the Searcher of Hearts, Vâlmîki respectfully submitted the following questions :—

“ Lives there among men, one who is crowned with every excellent quality ? ”

“ Who has mastered the science of weapons, human and divine, and out of the might engendered thereby, is able to scatter his foes before him ?

“ Who is versed in the mysteries of Dharma, as revealed in the Vēdas and the Smritis ?

“ Who is it that bears not in mind the grievous wrongs done him by others, but magnifies any single act of kindness on their part ?

“ Who is it whose thoughts, words, and deeds are ever in perfect harmony ?

“ Who never strays from his Dharma, even in the face of direst peril and distress ?

“ Whose life is pure and spotless ?

“ Who ever seeks the highest good of Humanity and of himself, here and hereafter ?

“ Whose eyes see clearly and unerringly between the Real and the Unreal ?

“ Who has a profound knowledge of men and things and twines himself round the hearts of all ?

“ Who is a perennial source of delight to all that approach him ?

“ Who, like a skilful driver, has his mind and senses under perfect control ?

“ Who is it that allows not his temper to get the upper-hand of him ?

“ Who is it, of presence so charming, that men can never have enough of beholding him ?

“ Whose heart knows not envy, spite, and calumny ?

“ Who is it that men and gods dare not face, when the fierce joy of battle is on him ?

“ Verily, it is almost hopeless to find all these noble elements combined in one single individual. But, if there be such a one, *you* would know it of all men ; for, Reverend Sir, there is nothing, either in the heavens above, or in the worlds below, that escapes your all-seeing eye. And nothing would gladden my heart so much as to hear it from your lips, if you but deem me worthy of the honor.”

He paused for a reply ; and Nârada, rejoiced at having at last got an opportunity of giving out to the world what had all along lain next his heart and had been the subject of his thoughts, waking or sleeping. Lo ! here was a disciple after his own heart, who thirsted for the very knowledge he was seeking to impart. What more could he desire. And then, the questions ! How clear and how comprehensive ! So, with a glad heart, he spoke back :—

“ Well hast thou questioned and skilfully. Of a truth, it is not easy to find one in whom all these diverse excellences are united ; but, with a little thought, I believe I can find you a person answering to your description. Verily, no one has a better right to know it, for, your keen and clear intellect is equalled but by your powerful memory. And now, listen with your heart and soul.

“ There now rules the earth a king, by name Râma, of the godly line of Ikshwâku ; and in him will you find your expectations fall very short of the reality.

“ He has his self under perfect control. His prowess is unequalled. The splendour of his presence baffles description. He is serene alike in weal and woe. His intellect is strong, keen, and comprehensive. There is very little that he does not know about king-craft. His sweet speech charms away the hearts of men. You can never have enough of looking at him, so lovely a sight is he to see. Enemies he has none, either in the world or in himself.

“ Broad are his shoulders and mighty ; his arms are stout and strong ; his neck is poised on his shoulders with perfect grace and the three lines around it make it charming to behold. His massive jaws are but an index to the iron will of the man. His broad chest and deep flanks bespeak a strength that could lightly take up a bow and string it, that others would never dream of approaching. His joints are strong and supple and embedded deep in muscle. His friends and followers may well bid defiance to their foes, be they ever so mighty. His hands

are long and powerful and reach down below his knees. His head is exquisitely modelled and his forehead beautifully arched like a crescent. Graceful and majestic is his gait, even as that of the lion or the elephant or the tiger.

" Neither too short nor too tall, his stature becomes him marvellously. His limbs are clean made and beautifully proportioned and his rich complexion speaks of the perfect health of the man. It requires but a simple effort of his will to destroy his enemies root and branch. His eyes are large and lustrous, even as the petals of the lovely lotus. Rich in all the things of the world that make a man happy, he is, in short, the beau-ideal of a man.

" The weak and the oppressed find in him a ready and fearless champion. He never makes a resolve but it is accomplished to the utmost. He is ever intent upon the highest good of all beings. Bright is his fame as the refuge of the stricken and the terror of his foes, even as the sun in his noon-day splendour. Ever engaged in meditation on the Supreme Brahman, he has realised his oneness with IT. Untouched by Desire and by Hate, with his system purified by the regulation of the Vital Currents and other yogic practices, and with a body, which, though real and substantial to all purposes, is but an illusion, and is formed out of a film of inconceivably subtle matter, he is ever pure of body, pure of heart, and pure of spirit. He is always obedient and dutiful unto his parents, to his teachers, and to the Gods; but, he forgets not, even for a moment, *who he is and why he has come down here*.

" He looks after the welfare of his subjects, even as the Great Patriarch, Brahma. Of every kind of wealth he has enough and to spare. ' In him the worlds live and move and have their being.' Unlike other rulers of men, he reads into the hearts of his subjects and realises for them their unspoken wishes, even beyond their wildest expectations. He has a watchful eye on the rights and duties of all grades of society and sees that they are carefully preserved and properly discharged. To himself he

is the strictest of taskmasters ; and his daily life is but a silent example and an unspoken lesson to the world in its perfect discharge of the manifold and complicated round of duties. Ever the spear and the shield of his friends and followers, his heart seeks their highest good here and hereafter. The Heart-Doctrine of the *Vēdas* and the *Vēdāngas*, lies open before his unclouded vision. He is a past master in the science and art of warfare and in the use and mastery of weapons, human and divine.

“ No arts nor sciences, lay or otherwise, have any secrets for him. His memory is something marvellous ; in argument he is ever clear and convincing, keen and thorough in his grasp of a subject, quick and ready in his replies, anticipating the slightest objections and difficulties of his opponents. One has but to come within the range of his benign glance, nay, to seek him in earnest thought, to have his heart wishes realised to their utmost, in this world or in the next. His manners are sweet and refined. The waves of adversity beat against him, but to roll back, baffled and broken. He is ever wise and skilful in his relations with the world, lay or religious.

“ As the rivers of the world, large and small, ever flow back to their heart and source, the mighty Ocean, and take rest and refuge in it, so the wisest and the best of the land, are ever attracted to him by similarity of tastes and pursuits and by an irresistible charm of manner. He embodies in himself whatever is highest and noblest in the Aryan race and nation. He is just and impartial in his dealings with all, friends and foes ; and his heart is like the calm waters of the mountain-lake, unruffled by the least breath of joy or sorrow. You may look at him ever so often, but every time you find in him something that surprises you, a new beauty, a new charm.

“ Said I not that Rāma, the pride and joy of his mother Kausalyā, unites in himself every conceivable perfection ?

“ Deep and unfathomable of purpose, like the vast and mighty Ocean whose unknown waters hide from human

eyes many a marvel and many a secret ; strong in his resolve and unshaken, even as the mighty Himâlayas, the Monarch of Mountains, whose roots run into the very heart of the Earth and whose proud head pierces the blue vaults of the Empyrean ; of valor and prowess like unto the Almighty ; of sweet presence and charming, even as the Queen of Night, the dispeller of darkness ; terrible in his wrath and all-consuming, not unlike the Fire that destroys the worlds at the close of the Great Day, but withal patient and enduring, even as Mother Earth ; a great Giver, even as Kubêra, the Lord of Wealth ; he is Truth and Justice, in human mould as it were.

“ And Dasaratha, the Lord of men, yielding to the oft-repeated prayers of his subjects, set his heart upon making over his kingdom to Râma, and along with it the cares of state—Râma, the living example of every virtue, Râma, of irresistible might, Râma, the firstborn of his sons, Râma, fitted by nature and education to be the best and brightest ornament to a throne, Râma, in whose heart the welfare and happiness of his subjects occupies the foremost place.

· “ Now, Kaikêyi, the best beloved of his wives, viewed with a troubled heart and envious eye, the gorgeous preparations that were on foot towards the installation of Râma. Long, long ago, during a fierce battle with the Asuras, she had saved the king’s life at the peril of her own ; and he, in a transport of gratitude, had allowed her to ask of him any boon she would. Now was her time ; and she said to the fond king ‘ Exile Râma to the forest and crown Bharata in his place.’

“ Dasaratha never went back upon his word ; for, was he not the proud descendant of the mighty monarchs of the Solar Race, who cheerfully sacrificed at the altar of Truth wife and child, wealth and kingdom, life and limb, nay, their very hopes here and hereafter, and deemed themselves happy in being allowed to do so ? He sent Râma away to the wild forests and with him his own life

and happiness ; for, Râma was the joy of his old age and the pride of his heart.

“ But Râma, the brightest example of filial reverence, whom, alone and unaided, the world’s hosts embattled dare not face, cheerfully gave up the crown that was his by right and betook himself to the forests, out of deference to his father’s wishes and out of a desire to gladden the heart of his mother Kaikêyî ; had they not his word for it ?

“ And Lakshmana, the favourite brother of Râma, cheerfully accompanied him to the woods, setting to all the world a rare example of fraternal affection ; he was ever a source of joy to his worthy mother, Sumitrâ, who sent him after Râma, with the memorable words, ‘ Henceforth, Râma is unto you a father and Sîtâ your loving mother ; the pathless woods are your royal home in Ayôdhyâ ; and may all good go with you.’

“ As the star Rôhini ever follows her Lord, the Moon, even so did Sîtâ accompany her husband to the wild woods. Of Janaka’s royal race she came, and was the fairest and best of the daughters of the earth. Dearer unto her lord than his very life, she lived in him and but for him. For, was she not his own energy, the Great Illusion, come down on earth to aid him in his great work ?

“ The sad king and his sadder subjects followed him a long way. At Srîgavêra, on the banks of the Gangâ, Râma came upon a dear friend of his, Guha, the king of the wild foresters, and bade his charioteer Sumantra go back to his father.

“ Then, guided by him, they travelled over many a trackless forest, and forded many a foaming torrent, until they halted at the hermitage of the saintly Bharadvâja, who directed them further on to Chitrakûta’s hill. There the brothers built for themselves a charming cottage and led a calm and peaceful life in the pleasant woods, happy even as are the gods and the Gandharvas.

" Meanwhile the unhappy father, stricken even unto death at being parted from the son of his heart, passed away in an agony of grief, calling upon his darling Rāma, and took his place in the Mansions of the Blessed. Thereupon Vasishtha and the other counsellors of Dasaratha tried their very best to induce Bharata to accept the vacant throne. But he, mighty of his arms and with his heart ever devoted to Rāma, would not even hear of it. He was on his way to the Royal exile to beg him to come back and rule over his people.

" Soon he came upon the high-souled One in his forest home ; and to him of irresistible valor, thus spoke Bharata in all humility and reverence. ' Now that our father is no more, yours is the crown, yours the kingdom ; and who knows, better than yourself, that a younger brother has no claim to the throne before his elder, best fitted to adorn it ? Come back and be king over us.'

Thus spake he ; but all in vain, for the other felt happier among his woods and streams, and chose the path his fathers trod before him, the path of honor and fame. The kingdom was his by right and by might ; but he had given his word to his royal sire, and was he the man to go back upon it ? Gently, but firmly, he persuaded Bharata to go back to Ayodhyā ; but, at his earnest prayer, gave him his sandals, thrice holy with the touch of his feet—visible representatives of the rightful king and the invisible source of Bharata's wise government and the welfare of his kingdom. Had not the world a glimpse of their greatness in the matter of Ahalyā ? ' Twice seven years hence will I meet you here. Doubt not,' were the words that fell upon the ears of the disappointed Bharata as he wended his sorrowful way back—not to Ayodhyā—to Nandigrāma, from where, as Regent of the Royal Sandals, he looked after the affairs of the kingdom, living the life of a hermit, his heart with Rāma and his eyes ever turned along the road that should bring his brother back to him.

“ Then, it occurred to Rāma, that at Chitrakūta he was easily accessible to his friends and subjects ; so he resolved to penetrate into the heart of the wild Dandaka forest. True, it was a rough life and utterly unmeet for such as were brought up in the lap of royal luxury and ease. But what was it to him ? Was not his word gone forth ? Were not his mind and senses under perfect control ? He never lacked anything, in his royal palace at Ayōdhyā, or in the rough ways of the forest.

“ So, with his faculties all on the alert, he plunged into the depths of the interminable woods and his eyes acquired a new light and charm at the prospect of approaching battle with the dread Rākshasas.

“ First and foremost of those that fell by his hand was the fierce Rākshasa, Virādha.

“ Thereupon, the World-honored paid his lowly respects to Sarabhanga, Sutikshna, Agastya, and his brother ; and from Agastya he received, with a glad heart, the mighty bow left with him by Indra, a goodly sword and two quivers that bore an inexhaustible supply of arrows.

“ And unto Rāma, who passed his days in the sweet company of the holy sages, came countless ascetics that had made Dandaka their home. Of fiery energy were they and radiant in their spiritual glory, but withal they prayed him to free them from the terrors and persecutions of the fierce Rākshasas and the lawless Asuras that infested the dark depths of Dandaka. Thereupon, Rāma gave them his plighted word to root out the wicked ones slowly, but surely, whenever a favourable chance should offer itself.

“ And it so came to pass, that a Rākshasi, Sūrpanakhā by name, came upon him in his lowly abode and went away mutilated and disgraced. Janasthāna was her home and she could, by her powers of illusion, take any form she chose. Fired thereto by the sight of their sister, thus disfigured and insulted and more so by her sharp taunts, her brothers, Khara and Dushana and Trisiras along with

them, rushed at Rāma and hemmed him round with their fierce hosts ; but, of the fourteen thousand terrible Rākshasas that marched forth to battle that woeful day, not one survived to tell the tale. One and all, they lay low on the field of Death, despatched to the Mansions of the Blessed by the fiery arrows of the solitary warrior.

“ It was not long before the news reached Rāvana, who, beside himself with rage at the total annihilation of his kinsmen and at the insult put upon him, besought the assistance of Māricha in aiding him to accomplish his fiendish scheme of revenge. Long and earnestly did Māricha seek to dissuade him from his fell purpose. ‘ Knowest thou not thou art but a grain of dust before the Great One ? Draw not, my Lord, upon thy head, the wrath of such as he.’ But Rāvana, driven thereto by resistless Fate, spurned aside the well-meant advice of his friend, and forced Māricha, on pain of death, to accompany him to the hermitage of the royal exiles.

“ There Rāvana used his friend to decoy the brothers far, far off from their cottage and in their absence, made away with the spouse of Rāma, and conveyed herto his island-home in Lanka, wounding unto death, Jatāyu, the Vulture-king, who defended her with the last drop of his blood.

“ The brothers came back soon enough and found that ‘ their house was left unto them desolate ’ ; for Sīta was not there. After a while, they came upon Jatāyu, who would not yield up his life before he had acquainted Rāma with the cruel outrage done him. Then, mighty grief overcame Rāma, and like unto one who had taken leave of his senses, he filled the woods around with heart-rending cries and piteous lamentations. But, mastering himself with a supreme effort, he consigned to the flames the mortal remains of the valiant Jatāyu, faithful unto death, and plunged into the deep woods in search of Sīta.

“ By and by, they fell in with a fierce Rākshasa, Kābandha by name, hideously deformed, and frightful to

behold. Him, Ráma slew and his vast bulk threw into the fire ; and the demon, purified of his sins by the touch of the Holy One, resumed his place among the Gandharvas. But, ere his departure, he informed Ráma of a woman-ascetic that lived not far off, Sabarí by name, well versed in the mysteries of Dharma and a worthy exponent thereof. ‘ Go unto her, my Lord ’ prayed Kabandha ; and unto her hermitage Ráma took his weary way. He had come down on Earth to destroy the evil forces that barred the path of his devotees to his feet and radiant looked he in the pride of his youth and might. Warm welcome did Sabarí extend unto Ráma ; and directed by her, he reached the shores of Lake Pampá.

“ There he fell in with Hanumán, a monkey, who introduced him to his master Sugriva. And Ráma related unto him all his griefs and all his misfortunes ; whereat, Sugriva’s heart was glad, in that heaven sent him a companion in misery, whose valor and prowess seemed irresistible. The two swore eternal friendship and faithful, while the God of Fire bore witness to it.

“ ‘ How did this come about ? ’ asked Ráma of his newly-made friend ‘ the blood-feud between you and your brother ? ’ ; and Sugriva acquainted him with the sad story. ‘ Now, will I slay you that brother of thine, even Váli,’ cried out Ráma ; and he swore it by a mighty oath. Then Sugriva spoke to him of the unequalled strength of Váli and his fierce valor, the terror of gods and men, Asuras and Rákshasas ; and half in jest, he cast his eyes upon a huge skeleton that lay hard by and said, ‘ This was once Dundubhi, the Asura ; and Váli kicked it here from Kishkindha, where he slew the braggart ’ A curious smile played over the features of Ráma—a smile of pity at Sugriva’s distrust of his might and at the trivial task set upon him to test it ; and he gave it a light kick with his toe that sent it flying twenty leagues off. Then, to make assurance doubly sure, he loosened a shaft from his bow, that cleft seven towering Sála trees, pierced

through a mighty mountain beyond, and stayed not its course until it ran through the seven regions beneath the Earth and came back to its master.

“ Sugrīva doubted no more ; his eyes were opened and his spirits rose ; and with a light heart and joyful mien, he took his way to the Kishkindha cave, and the princes along with him. Stationing himself before it, he gave forth from his broad and tawny chest a leonine roar that shook the hills around. Thereat, Vāli rushed out in mad fury, but was stayed by his wife Tārā, whose fears he managed to allay. And in the fierce fight that ensued, Rāma’s shaft cleft his mighty heart in twain. Thus did Rāma fulfil his promise to Sugrīva, and seat the weary exile on his brother’s throne.

“ In hot haste did Sugrīva send for all the monkeys under the Sun and for their chiefs, and despatched them North and South, East and West, in search of Sītā.

“ Of those that proceeded South, was Hanumān, the pride and glory of his race. He heard from Sampāti, the Vulture, that Sītā was in Lanka, held there in durance vile by the infamous Rāvaṇa ; and with a tremendous leap, he vaulted sheer over the two hundred leagues of roaring waters that lay between.

“ Landing on the sea-girt isle where the dread Rāvaṇa held his royal sway, he came upon Sītā in the Aśoka grove, her heart far away over the wide waters and with her lord. With her he had speech, and showed unto her his credentials, the ring given him by her lord. He related unto her all that befell Rāma meanwhile. ‘ Grieve not, noble lady,’ he exclaimed, ‘ your lord spares no pains to come to you ; soon, sooner than you think, will you see him here.’ And half in sport, he shattered to pieces the huge ornamental gateway of that vast pleasure-garden.

“ Thereat, came against him, five mighty captains of hosts, and close upon their heels, seven sons of counsellors, whom he made short work of ; then, Aksha, the valiant

son of Rāvana, whom he reduced to a shapeless mass ; and in the end, allowed himself to be bound by the Brah-mâstra of Indrajit. Thanks to the boon conferred on him by the Lotus-born One, he freed himself therefrom ; but, desirous to see Rāvana face to face and have speech with him, he chose to appear as if still in bonds, and calmly put up with the insults of his captors, who dragged him in triumph before their lord. His ruse was successful ; he had the pleasure of bearding the lion in his den and failed not to give him a piece of his mind and that freely. He then burnt the town with hostile flame, all except where Sīta sat and flew back on the wings of speed to carry the welcome tidings to the expectant ears of his master. Soon stood he before the high-souled One, went round him reverently and cried out, ‘ Found ! These eyes were erstwhile blessed with the sight of my mother, Sīta.’

“ The princes lost no time in reaching the shores of the dark Ocean and along with them Sugrīva and his countless hosts. Rāma called upon the Lord of Waters to come unto him, but he came not ; whereat he was wroth and with his shafts, bright and fierce as the noonday Sun, he shook the mighty Ocean to its very depths. Then the heart of the Monarch of the Deep quaked within him ; he laid his head at the feet of Rāma and implored pardon. And at his advice, Rāma caused the monkey chief, Nala, to lay a bridge across the fathomless waters. Over it they crossed to the island-home of Rāvana and him did Rāma slay in dire battle.

Now was Sīta once more his own. But, sad was his heart and cruel shame held him back ; for, had she not dwelt with the Râkshasa, ever so many months ? Would not the cruel world point its finger of scorn at him and cry, ‘ Lo ! he has taken her back unto him ; and the vile Rāvana laid his unclean hands on her and had her with him long enough.’ So, he spoke to her bitter words and sharp, in the hearing of the assembled hosts. And, cut

to the heart, Sītā, chaste as Chastity and pure as driven snow, brooked it not, but consigned her fair body unto the affrighted flames. The God of Fire bore her back in hot haste and swore her spotless and unsullied, by all he held sacred. Gladness filled the heart of Rāma and his face shone bright ; the three worlds rejoiced thereat, animate and inanimate, men and gods, saints and sages, and lauded to the skies the glorious deed of Rāma. Vibhīshāna, the brother of Rāvaṇa, was crowned king of Lanka in his place ; and, his stupendous work accomplished, Rāma's heart was relieved of a load of anxiety and danced with joy. The Gods, one and all, showered their choicest boons upon him, through which he raised to life his faithful monkeys that fell in battle.

“ Then, with his friends and followers, did he turn his face towards Ayōdhyā, and was conveyed thereto in the swift-coursing Pushpaka, the magic air-car of Kubēra. Making a halt at the hermitage of the holy Bharadvāja, he sent Hanumān before him to announce his return to his brother Bharata. After a while, he resumed his journey and beguiling the way by recounting his adventures in the wild woods, soon reached Nandigrāma.”

“ There the brothers put away the matted locks and lowly habiliments of recluses ; and Rāma, pure and stainless, welcomed Sītā to his heart and took his place upon his father's throne.

“ Under his benign rule, the people are rich in flocks and herds. Their homes resound with the joyous laughter of happy children. Famine and disease are strangers to the land. Each order of society goes through its round of duties cheerfully and lacks not the means to do it. Their lives know no calamity, public or private. No one suffers the pangs of hunger nor eats his heart out with grief. His subjects are rich in all the joys that boundless wealth can give and are blessed with perfect health and sweet content. No father is doomed to see his son die before his eyes. Wives never outlive their

husbands nor suffer the cruel shame of widowhood, but pass their days in loving service to their lords. His subjects are immune from all perils through wind or wave, fire or fever. Thieves and robbers, hunger and want, are things unknown during the rule of Râma. Town and hamlet, village and city, are amply rich in corn and wealth. And all are as happy and content as in the Krita yuga, the Golden Age of the world.

"Horse-sacrifices without number will he perform, at which he will give away to Brâhmaṇas vast quantities of gold and gems and countless heads of cattle. Hundreds and thousands of royal houses will he found, such as Kâmarûpa, Kânyakubja, and others too numerous to mention. He will see that the four orders of society are secured in their rights and privileges and discharge their duties to their very best. The years of Râma's reign on earth are ten thousand and hundreds ten. And then, in the fulness of time, will he go back to his seat in the highest Heavens.

This record of Râma's life purifies the heart of men, destroys their sins and confers supreme merit. Hence the wise hold it in equal reverence with the Holy Writ ; and he who reads it with a devout heart, is freed from sin of every kind. A long and happy life is his portion in the world of men ; and when he goes away from it, he is a welcome guest in the World of Gods and is held in high honor among them, yea, his kith and kin.

"Should a Brâhmaṇa read it, gift of speech is his meed, and wisdom equalled by none. Should one of the Warrior race read it, the wide Earth and all it contains owns his sway. Should a Vaisya read it, merchant-princes pay homage to him ; nay, should a Sûdra happen to hear it read, he shall win honor and glory among his kind."

CHAPTER II

HOW VÂLMÎKI CAME TO COMPOSE THE RÂMÂYANA.

He ceased ; and Vâlmîki, the soul of righteousness, listened in awe and reverence ; himself a speaker of no mean ability, he spoke to Nârada out of a full heart. “O ! thou of inscrutable might ! well hast thou spoken and marvellously ;” and his disciples were not behind him in their glowing praises of the Divine Sage.

Later on, when Nârada rose to go, Vâlmîki offered unto him reverent worship.

“ Have I your leave to go ? ” said Nârada.

“ As my lord willeth,” replied the grateful host ; and the wise One resumed his aerial course towards the Heavenly Spheres.

Vâlmîki spent an hour or two in his cottage, after his guest left it, his thoughts absorbed in the eventful conversation of the morn. All at once he found that it was high time for the midday bath and started for the lovely Tamasa, not far remote from the Gangâ.

The crystal waters of the murinuring brook caught his heart and turning to the faithful disciple that waited upon him, he exclaimed, “ Seest thou yon stream, Bharadvâja, the pebbly beach carpeted with soft sand right up to the water’s edge, with pleasant fords and neat ? The smooth pellucid waters remind me of the hearts of good men, calm and unruffled. This is a pure spot and holy ; put down thy waier jar here and hand me my bathing-dress of bark, for, here will I bathe. True, the sacred Gangâ is not far off ; but Tamasa is so charming to-day, and I fear we are already behind time for the midday prayers.”

The disciple bowed in reverent assent and with a ready hand offered unto his master his dress of bark; for, he regarded himself as supremely blessed in being allowed to serve the Holy One. Vâlmîki took it from him and with his senses under restraint, penetrated into the dark woods around, seeking for a suitable spot to bathe and meditate upon the Lord of All.

Not far from him, a pair of curlews, cock and hen, were disporting themselves merrily, in the best of health and spirits, singing sweetly the while; when, all at once, a fowler, the relentless foe of every innocent bird and beast, sent his arrow right into the heart of the cock, all ignoring the presence of the Holy One who was looking on. Down fell the fated bird, at the feet, as it were, of the horrified Vâlmîki and wallowed in its life-blood. With crest of golden hue and wings outspread, it was taken all unawares, mad with love and in the very act of enjoying itself with its mate. And at the sight of her lord and love, now rolling in the dust in the agonies of death, the wretched hen, shrieked a long and bitter cry, rendered all the more so, in that the flames of her love were as yet unquenched.

Vâlmîki, the soul of boundless compassion and justice, was filled with indescribable pity towards the poor hen, now hopelessly disconsolate. "A cruel act this and unnatural," cried he, "even for a hardened hunter. How could one have the heart to strike to death a poor bird, and that in the sweet embraces of love, with the fervent kisses of its mate still warm on its lips?"

The poor victim before his eyes roused the self-contained sage to ungovernable wrath and from his unconscious lips shot forth a mighty curse.

"Hapless wretch! may'st thou, for long years to come, never find a spot in this wide world to rest thy weary head. Didst thou not slay a lovely and harmless curlew, that was blind with passion and in the very arms of his love."

He spoke and paused ; a dire misgiving came over his heart and he said to himself. " Passing strange ! How came I, of subdued passions and serene heart, to speak words of such dread import, that rob me of my hard-earned spiritual might ? "

But, even as he brooded over it, a light broke upon his mind and he exclaimed to Bharadvāja. " My heart was now wrung with pity and grief at the miserable fate that overtook the poor bird, when, these wild words of doom broke out from my unconscious lips ; but lo ! they are arranged in equal lines of even feet, perfect and flawless, admirably adapted to be sung or played. Well, this shall confer undying fame on me and never shall it prove otherwise."

Bharadvāja listened to him in awe and wonder—the Holy One, whose powers for good or evil were almost boundless—and softly repeated the words to himself, whereat his master was mightily pleased.

Then Vālmīki had his long delayed bath and went through his prayers. All slowly he wended his way back to the hermitage, his thoughts still engrossed with his prophetic words,—the marvellous verse that rose unbidden to his lips and bore a terrible curse in its bosom. Bharadvāja, profoundly learned, yet lowly of heart, followed him at an humble distance with the water-jar on his shoulders, the pitcher brimming over with the pure fresh waters of the rill. Soon they reached the hermitage and the master discoursed to his disciples awhile on themes high and holy ; but his thoughts were far away and with his utterance of the morning.

Then there came unto him in his calm retreat, the Four-faced One, Brahma, Father of the Earth and the Skies, the Supreme Ruler and Fashioner of countless systems. True, he could, from his seat on high, cause the holy record of Rāma's deeds to reach the ears and the hearts of men ; but, for certain reasons of his own, he chose the

fortunate Vâlmîki as a fitting instrument of that grand service to Humanity.

Up sprang Vâlmîki in wondering awe to welcome his Divine Guest of radiant presence ; laid his head at his feet and duly offered unto him the rites of hospitality in all humility and reverence.

The Omniscient One accepted the seat of honor offered him, made kind enquiries about the welfare of his host and bade him sit nigh, which he did. But his thoughts ever ran upon the strange events of the day.

“ Alas ! ” said he to himself, “ how did the wretch bring himself to harm the innocent things, so sweet of voice and so entirely absorbed in their love as to be oblivious to everything around ? He shrank not from the cruel deed and had caused me to lose my temper and commit an act of folly that had robbed me of my hard-won merit.”

And he went on unconsciously repeating to himself the strange words that escaped his lips that eventful morn.

A curious smile lit the features of the Lotus-born One,—a smile of kindly pity in that the sage had not as yet divined the source of his inspiration.

“ Know you not ” said he, in accents of liquid melody “ that it was at my direction that Sarasvatî, the Goddess of Speech, uttered through your lips the seeming curse ? The words that cause your innocent heart a world of anxiety shall bring unto you boundless fame. Doubt no more, but give unto the world the story of Râma, even as you have heard it from my son Nârada. What nobler subject for your poem than Sri Râmachandra, the Divine hero, the soul of righteousness, the perfect embodiment of all that is good and great and the director of men’s thoughts, words, deeds in the light of their Karma ?

“ Nothing that relates to any of the actors in that great world-drama shall escape thy all-seeing eye—Râma, Lakshmana, Sîtâ, men and monkeys, gods and Râkshasas,

their acts, their words, nay their very thoughts known or secret. Nothing that comes out of your mouth, consciously or otherwise, shall prove other than true. Sing thou a poem that shall charm away the hearts of men, perfect in its rhythm and melodious in its flow. The cloud-capped mountains, the swift-coursing rivers, and all created things shall pass away and be as naught. But your noble song shall outlive them and never fade from the hearts of men. And as long as the record of Rāma's life holds sway over the hearts of men, so long shall you sit by me in my highest heaven." He spoke and was seen no more among them.

And the sage sat still in hushed awe and silent amaze, and his disciples along with him ; then all at once they broke forth into melodious song, reciting again and again the sweet verse 'Mānīshāda,' perfect in rhythm and faultless in metre ; and so sung and recited by those disciples of his, grown grey in sacred lore, its fame grew apace in the world of men.

" Now " said Vālmīki " shal! I sing the Life of Rāma, yea, the whole of it, in such verses as these."

Long and deeply did he ponder over it and gave to a grateful world the Grand Epic. Sung in diverse measures ; of even feet and accents ; grand in its style and chaste and polished in its diction ; simple, yet profoundly suggestive ; the mighty genius of the immortal Vālmīki has preserved for all Eternity the glorious deeds of the Divine Man, Śrī Rāmachandra, in countless verses as beautiful and perfect as the one that was spoken through his lips by the Goddess of Speech. Listen ye to the noble poem '*The Fall of Rāvana*,' sung by the holy sage who gave unto posterity the Life of the noblest of men, Rāghava. No defect of style or idiom, grammar or diction mars its perfect beauty. Sweet and melodious of flow, the sound is a perfect echo to the sense.

CHAPTER III.

HOW THE RÂMÂYANA WAS COMPOSED.

Vâlmîki, the soul of righteousness, had from Nârada but a bare outline of the life and deeds of Sri Râmachandra of mighty intellect—a wonderful narrative, truly, in that it realises the Purushârthas for those that hear it recited. But he did not stop there; he would know it more fully, in all its details and applied himself to the task.

Duly purifying himself by sipping consecrated water, he took his seat on the sacred grass spread with their ends towards the East. He reverenced in spirit his Divine Teacher and began his work, aided therein by the superhuman powers conferred on him by Brahma.

Then there unfolded themselves before his inner eye, picture after picture of old times and events—Râma, Lakshmana and Sîtâ, Daśaratha, his queens and his subjects, as they lived and moved, laughed or cried; their joys and griefs; their friendships and enmities; whatever befell Râma, Lakshmana and Sîtâ, while they sojourned in the wild woods and later on; all these and much more did he see, plain and clear, perfect down to the minutest details, even as a fruit within his finger's clasp. Everything was even as Nârada had related it to him. His face and form shone bright as he lost himself in the delightful contemplation of the divine perfections of Sri Râma; with the scenes of his life before his eyes, he set himself to compose the Grand Epic, the Râmâyana. The shores of the Ocean are strewed with shells, seaweed and such like trifles thrown up from its bosom; but in its mighty depths lie concealed from human view priceless treasures and rare. Even so, of the four aims of life, Pleasure and Wealth lie on its surface, while Dharma and Môksha rest at the

bottom. The music of the verses arrests the ear, while the sense charms the heart; and it proclaims for all time, to the devout soul, the countless glories of the Supreme One, the end and aim of all World-scriptures.

In the first six books of his immortal Epic, Vālmīki describes the coming down into our mortal world of the Lord Vishṇu, in merciful response to the earnest prayers of the Shining Ones; his heroic worth; his wonderful strength and fortitude; his kindness to every living being, his unequalled popularity; his sweet patience that nothing can ruffle; his gentleness and his constant truth; many a tale and legend old from the lips of Visvāmitra, when the princes sojourned with him; how at Janaka's royal hall Rāma broke to pieces the mighty bow of Mahādēva, that none could bend; the marriage of the sons of Dasaratha; the high talk between Śrī Rāma and Rāma of the Axe.

The rare excellences of Rāma that eminently fitted him for the office of Prince-Regent; the gorgeous preparations made by Qasaratha for his coronation; how the black-hearted Kaikēyi frustrated it and caused Rāma to be exiled to the forest; the poignant grief of Qasaratha and his death in consequence; the heart-rending scene when Rāma took leave of the people; how he went away unperceived from among those that followed him a long way; how he met Guha on the bank of Gangā and persuaded his charioteer Sumanṭra to return to Ayodhyā; how they crossed the river and sought Bharadvāja in his forest abode; how, through his directions, Rāma had a lovely cottage built on the sides of Chitrakūta and spent happy days; how Bharata came upon him there and earnestly prayed him to come back unto his own; how he received the sad news of his father's death and offered libations of water unto his manes; how he gave his sandals unto Bharata and prevailed upon him to go back; how Bharata had them crowned and ruled in their name at Nandigrāma.

How Râma penetrated thereafter into the dark depths of Qandaka and slew Virâdha ; how they came unto the hermitage of Anasûyâ, who presented Sîtâ with a sandal paste and unguents of rare virtue ; how Râma, paid his respects to Sarabhanga, Agastya, Sutikshna and Jatayu and took up his abode at Pachhavati ; how the Râkshasi Sûrpanakhâ came upon them there and how Lakshmana mutilated her of her nose and ears ; how he slew, in fierce fight, Khara, Dushana and Trisiras that came to avenge her ; how Râvana came over from Lankâ at the news, decoyed Râma and Lakshmana through the wily Mâricha and carried away Sîtâ ; how Râma slew Mâricha and raved at the loss of his wife ; the death of Jatayus ; how the brothers came upon Kabandha who directed them unto Sabari ; how they reached the shores of the Lake Pampâ and from there proceeded to the hill of Rishyamûka, where they made the acquaintance of Sugriva ; how Râma sware friendship with him and convinced him of his might ; how Sugriva fought his brother Vâli ; how Râma slew the latter during the combat ; the wild laments of Târâ ; the installation of Sugriva ; Râma's sojourn at the Prasravana hill during the rains ; how his wrath blazed forth against Sugriva, who thereupon hastened to gather his countless hosts and despatched them to all quarters of the Earth, with minute description of every part of the same ; how Râma entrusted Hanumân with his Signet Ring ; how the monkeys lost their way into the cave of Riksha ; how they resolved to starve themselves to death ; their meeting with Sampati, the vulture, upon whose information, Hanumân took a leap across the sea, from the Mahêndra mountains ; how he met Mainâka on his way and slew Simhikâ ; how he landed at nightfall on Mount Malaya, in Lankâ, and took counsel with himself ; how he came upon Râvana sleeping in his aerial car, Pushpaka, and upon his wives in the drinking-saloon ; how he sought out Sîtâ in the Asôka grove and gave her Râma's token ; how Râvana persecuted her with his love ;

how the Rākshasi women threatened Sītā; how Trijatā related unto her the dream she had; how Hanumān received from Sītā her crest-jewel and destroyed the grove; how the affrighted women-guards took up the news to Rāvana; how Hanumān slew the hosts sent against him and became a willing captive to the Brahmāstra of Indrajit; how he set the city on fire and roared for very joy; how he rejoined his companions and destroyed the honey-grove; how he gave his lady's token to Rāma and consoled him; how Rāma proceeded with his forces to the shores of the ocean; how he promised refuge unto Vibhishana; how he caused Nala, the monkey, to throw a bridge across the mighty deep and led his hosts over it to Lankā's isle; how he laid siege to it at night and aided therein by the counsels of Vibhishana, laid low in fierce battle Indrajit, Kumbakarna, Rāvana and the other Rākshasa heroes; how he took back Sītā and had Vibhishana crowned as king of Lankā; how he went back to Ayodhyā in the magic car, Pushpaka, and met his brother Bharata on the way; and how he was crowned king and sent back to their homes his countless friends and allies that came to the capital to be present on the happy occasion.

And in the Uttarakānda has the poet described the coming years of Rāma; his golden rule; how he cast away his queen to avoid popular censure; and everything that was to befall him in the unknown future.

CHAPTER IV.

KUSA AND LAVA SING THE RÂMÂYANA BEFORE RÂMA.

Vâlmîki, the prince of poets, composed the Life of Râmâ, when he was reigning at Ayôdhyâ, after his terrible wars with Râvana; and the Seer's eye bestowed on him by the Lotus-born One, aided him in that grand work of flawless diction.

The seven cantos are divided into 500 chapters, and contain 24,000 verses, (the Uttarakânda included). The Holy One, out of his matchless wisdom, included in it every thing that befell Râma in the distant past or was to in the remote future.

Having brought the tale to an end, he cast about for some one who would commit it to memory and carry it to the ears of men. As he thus mused and prayed to the Giver of all good to send him one who would accomplish his purpose, there came unto him two disciples, Kusa and Lava by name, clad in the garb of hermits, but princes by birth, and reverently touched his feet.

The twins had been brought up under his watchful care and were dear unto his heart; of sweet voice and melodious, they were gifted with a marvellous faculty of retentiveness; thorough masters of the Holy Writ and its branches, they were skilled in every art and science, lay or clerical; steadfast in righteousness and strong of heart, they were chosen by Vâlmîki as fit instruments of his noble purpose and unto these he taught his Great Epic, which he named 'Râmâyana' or 'Sîtâ Charitra' or 'Paulastya Vadha.'—a mighty repository of the priceless wisdom enshrined in the Vêdas. Sweet to recite and sweeter to sing, it gives perfect expression to every sentiment that moves the human breast—love, heroism, disgust, terror, pathos, wonder, mirth, calm, and fear.

They stored it within their hearts and in obedience to the dictates of their master, sang it to large concourses of Brâhmaṇas and warriors, sages and saints, in the three kinds of measure and to the sweet accompaniment of musical instruments. Divinely skilled in the science and art of song, golden-throated, equally adept at every musical instrument, they were thoroughly conversant with the origin and nature of notes, scales and pitches, and with the complex science of expression. Of surpassing loveliness, faultless in form and feature, they were the living counterparts of Sri Râmachandra himself.

Through many a land they travelled and sang to many an audience; and on one occasion, before the sages that were enjoying their well-earned rest during the intervals of the Horse-sacrifice celebrated by Râma. With streaming eyes and ravished hearts did the Holy Ones listen to the recital and roused to the highest pitch of admiration, applauded them to the echo. Strangers to guile and envy, the simple souls praised in no mean terms the noble poem, the gifted author and the incomparable singers.

“ What charming music! what sweetness and melody of verse! And then, the vividness of narration! We seem to live and move among old times and scenes long gone by.”

The brothers themselves seemed to feel the sacred thirst of fame and excelling their previous efforts, they took their highest pitch and sang away the hearts of the listeners; for, the sound was an echo to the sense. And one among them rose up and made the singers a present of his waterpot; and another, no mean connoisseur of the noble art of poetry and music, gave them his hermit dress of bark.

Thus, many a time and oft, did these boys recite it in crowded halls and broad streets, in sacred groves and sacrificial grounds:

“ A rare and noble epic this, the Râmâyana ” cried the hearers “ of honeyed verses and faultless diction,

beautifully adapted to music, vocal or instrumental and charming to hear ; begun and finished according to the best canons of the art, the most exacting critic cannot praise it too highly ; the first of its kind and an unapproachable ideal for all time to come ; the best model for all future poets ; the thrice-distilled Essence of the Holy Scriptures ; the surest giver of health and happiness, length of years and prosperity, to all who read or listen to it. And proficients as ye are in every style of music, marvellously have ye sung it."

It chanced one day that Bharata, the brother of Râma, heard them recite and failed not to inform the king of it. Râghava, the mightiest of men, invited the noble twins to the palace and showed unto them due respect ; seated on the gem-encrusted throne of gold brought down by his sire from the high heaven of Indra and surrounded by his loving brothers and faithful ministers, he gazed long and fondly on the boys who were the exact images of himself and exclaimed to his wondering brothers. "Mark you the radiant glory that plays around them ? Like Gods than men ! And the poem they recite, how wonderful in its suggestiveness ! Listen we to it !"

And putting away all cares from his heart, he prepared himself to listen and directed the boys to commence. With voices of perfect accord and entrancing sweetness, faultless in note and measure, the brothers sang in melodious strains the following poem ; and such the perfectness of expression and delicacy of execution, that the hearers followed them with their hearts and ears ; and such the marvellous power of their song, that an indescribable sense of bliss gradually stole over them and pervaded their frame and every sense and faculty of theirs—strange, overpowering and almost painful in its intensity.

Then Râma addressed himself to those around him and said "Behold these young ascetics, of kingly form and mien ! Rare singers they are and of mighty spiritual

energy withal. And the noble poem they recite, how sweet and solacing to my wounded heart, reft of my beloved ! Fail not to accord it attention meet."

The boy-hermits, thus directed by the World-honored, set about to sing the Epic, in the Mārgī style of music ; the soul-entrancing strains failed not to draw Rāma from his lofty throne, to take his seat among the audience that he might better hear the gifted twins. Soon was he lost to everything around him and lived and moved but in the no distant past.

CHAPTER V.

AYÔDHYÂ.

From the far-off times of Manu, the Divine Ruler, the mighty kings of the line of Ikshwâku held victorious and undisputed sway over the broad Earth and the seven islands that guard it around.

Of their race came king Sagara, at whose high command was dug the Ocean, dark and deep, by his sixty thousand sons that thronged around him as he marched along.

And this grand Epic, the Râmâyana, of immortal fame, sings the lives and deeds of those mighty men of old. The devout reader thereof secures the four Aims of Life —Righteousness, Wealth, Happiness and Liberation. So give ear unto it with hearts free from Envy's taint.

The broad realms of Kôsala extend far away on either banks of the Sarayû. Rich in the wealth of flocks and herds, fertile fields and broad pastures, it forms the happy home of countless millions.

And of that kingdom is Ayôdhyâ the capital, famed of old through all the worlds, and fashioned in ages past by the royal hand of the Divine Manu.

Built on a level stretch of ground, well-watered and fertile, lovely groves adorn it and broad fields, where waves the golden corn.

Excellent roads, lined with branching trees, connect it with every part of the world. Her lofty walls measure twelve leagues from end to end and three from side to side. High are her ramparts and massive and lined with, numerous guns and every death-dealing engine ever invented by man's fertile brain; and all around them, moats wide and deep. The city gates are large and strong and of exquisite workmanship; and the impregnable fortifications justify its name, Ayôdhyâ.

The high roads, planned perfectly straight unto the very gates of the city, are ever kept clean and well watered, and strewed with fragrant flowers. Laid out in even squares like a chess board, the broad and well kept roads branch out from the royal homes that grace the centre of the town.

Long lines of palatial shops adorn the merchant quarters, stored with the rarest works of nature and of art.

Charming villas and pleasure-grounds peep out from every lovely hill and eminence. Splendid mansions, flashing with gold and gems, rise in goodly row and meet the eye at every turn. Numerous flags and banners gaily wave over the roofs of the towering houses built on lofty platforms and gives one the idea of the radiant aerial cars of the happy ones who have won the abodes of the gods by the force of their religious merit.

Rich is it in horses and elephants, sheep and oxen, mules and camels. From every street are wafted to the ear the sweet sounds of lute or flute, drum or tabret, fife or clarion, *Vina* or *Sitār*. It is the happy home of bards and minstrels, poets and genealogists, sculptors and architects ; and in the streets you are jostled at every step by the teachers of the art of dance and song, by the envoys of foreign kings and tributary princes and by princely merchants from far off lands, that come there to buy and sell. No art nor science, lay or otherwise, but finds there its best and brightest exponent and highest authority.

And Brāhmaṇas, straight of speech and pure of heart, bless the city with their presence and form the living stones in the Guardian Wall of Humanity. Profoundly versed in all the sacred lore, they ever tend the Fires and keep the observances ; and in self-restraint and holy fervor, rank with the saintly Vasishtha and the like.

Great Car-warriors and god-like heroes, skilled in every art of war and chase, keep the city from the foe. With sharp weapons, but more often with their strong hands,

they rid the woods of many a wild beast, lion and tiger, boar and bear. Masters of every weapon, human and divine, they never strike the solitary foeman or the flying one ; they never attack any one from behind nor harm the only scion of his race.

And, over this best and fairest of cities reigned Dasaratha, even as the Great Indra holds high sway over the Regions of the Gods.

CHAPTER VI.

DASARATHA.

And from this city, did king Dasaratha reign over his people, wisely and well, even as Manu, the Divine Ruler of men.

Wonderfully strong and hardy, he combined in himself the utmost grace and beauty of form. With his senses under perfect restraint and of subdued self, his innate glory was but thinly veiled by his vesture of flesh.

He was one of the noblest kings that ever reigned, an Atiratha among those that came of the mighty line of Ikshvâku. He was the terror of his foes and the joy of his friends and subjects; and his name and fame was a household word in all the worlds, high and low.

They that seek a saint laud him for holiness of life and spiritual fervor, and in his untold wealth of corn and grain, gold and gems, silk and wool, he rivalled Indra, the Monarch of the Gods or Kubêra, the Lord of Riches.

Profoundly conversant with every art and science of his age, lay or clerical, his joy lived in the weal of his kingdom. By liberal gifts, he attracted to himself the best and brightest of the land in the arts of war or peace; ever on the watch for an opportunity to extend his dominions, enlarge his armaments and increase the strength of his fortresses and garrisons, he was a past master of kingcraft and his schemes always read into the far future and anticipated the results.

Numerous sacrifices did he celebrate; and he never tired of providing for the welfare and comfort of his subjects, by countless works of public utility or recreation. Straight of heart and truthful of speech, he ever pursued the four Aims of Life at the right time and without clash. In a word, Indra the Mighty, ruled not over his Heavenly Realm with greater glory or ability.

And they to whom it was given to reside in that best of cities, were ever just and happy, generous and broad-hearted, truth-speaking and contented and well versed in every traditional lore and legend. You may search the city from end to end and never come across any one of limited means, poor in his stores of grain and corn, horses and cattle ; for, poverty was a thing unknown among them. Nor can you see any one but was dressed in garments bright and clean and was adorned with ear-rings and necklaces, wreath and garland, perfumes and flowers, chain and bracelet. An atheist or an unlettered man or one of cruel instincts or a sensualist, or an Egoist was a sight unknown in that fair capital of Dasaratha. There was none who put his love of lucre before self and duty, father and mother, wife and child, brother and friend. All were godly in spirit, self-controlled, of clean lives and generous impulses and like unto the sages of yore in the utter purity of their lives. Nor could you lay your finger upon any one who was hunger-worn or low-spirited or gloomy of soul or mean of nature. Nor could your eye rest upon any one who cast longing looks on his neighbour's goods or goodly wife. Nor was the place defiled by a thief or a liar or an envious man, or a deformed person or ugly. Nor did the walls shelter any who was not the soul of loyalty ; nor any one who knew not the means to secure his happiness here and hereafter, nor any one who sacrificed not to the Gods and to the Holy Fires.

The Brâhmaṇas there, embodied in themselves the loftiest ideals of the nation and in their rigid discharge of their complicated round of duties, led the way for the other classes to follow, studying and teaching, giving and receiving, undefiled by any sin that attaches thereunto. They counted among them none who did not tend the Holy Fires nor keep the observances ; nor any one who had not mastered the Vêdas and its six branches.

The other orders of society were ever brave, truthful and righteous, kind and hospitable to the wayworn and the homeless, devout and reverential unto the Beings on high ; ever grateful for kindnesses done and received, their days were long and happy, in the midst of their friends and relations, wives and children, sons and grandsons, even unto the furthest remove.

The warrior caste was ever fain to render due obedience to the counsel and behest of the Brāhmaṇas ; the Vaisyas were proud to honor and obey the ruling class ; and the Śudras, the tillers of the soil, never swerved from their rule of life, but ever offered humble and cheerful service to their superiors.

Brave men and true ever kept watch and ward over the place ; frank and open as a child, yet of terrible might ; quick to feel and swift to retaliate ; adepts in the use of every weapon and grown grey in the art of war, they were ‘the heroes of a hundred fights.’ And even as a lofty mountain-cave guarded by fierce lions, was this fair city rendered unassailable through the lion-hearted veterans, who fought and won, or lay with faces grim, turned still in death towards the despised foe. Such his troops.

Horses had he, millions of them, of noblest breed, drawn from the mountain fastnesses of Bāhlīka, Kāmbhōja or Vanāyu or from the sandy wastes of Sindh. Matchless they stood for grace and speed, even as the Ucchaisravas, the horse that Indra bestrides.

The forests of the Vindhya and the heights of the Himalaya supplied him with rare elephants. Of the stock of Airāvata they came, of Mahāpadma, of Anjana and of Vāmana. Of vast bulk and height, they were ever in rut, like hills in motion. Bhadra, Mandra, Mriga ; Bhadra Mandra, Bhadra Mriga, and Mriga Mandra, every species was represented in his stables.

The terror of his well-appointed army allowed no enemy to approach within leagues of his capital and made it worthy of the name she bore—“The Impregnable.”

And like unto Indra in might and glory, or even as the silvery Moon among the distant stars, did Dasaratha, the unconquered, rule over that fair Maiden City, strong in its fortifications and garrisons, and bright with its noble buildings and nobler men.

CHAPTER VII.

PASARATHA'S MINISTERS.

Ministers, eight in number, assisted the wise and war-like monarch in the government of his vast empire—Dhrishti, Jayanta, Vijaya, Siddhârtha, Arthasâdhaka, Asôka, Mantrapâla and Sumantra; Vasishtha and Vâma-dêva were his spiritual guides, while Jâbâli and the rest took their place among his counsellors.

They were excellent readers of character, faithful and true; their thoughts, words and deeds ever in perfect accord; of subdued senses; of large private means; gifted with extraordinary intelligence; sweet-spoken; of honest fame and true to their promises even unto death; of unsurpassed valor and fortitude; they ever had their eye on everything that tended to the best interests of their master and was dear to his heart. Their time, their talents and their energies were devoted to the affairs of the state and they discharged their trust thoroughly and efficiently. Well-versed in the intricate science and art of polity, they would sooner die than stoop to a mean action or an unjust one. Famed for their never-failing patience and spiritual might, they would not utter an untruth from motives of anger or love or gain. Of considerable tact and knowledge of the world, they acquainted themselves through their spies with everything that took place in their country or abroad—past, present or in contemplation. Of well-tried friendship, they dealt out justice swift and meet, be it son or stranger, friend or foe.

Ever law-abiding, they safe-guarded the interests of the good and the righteous; their hand was ever heavy on the wicked and the impious, but was never lifted against the innocent, be he their worst enemy. Ever successful against the foes of the state and clever in foiling their deep-laid plans, they never let slip any occasion

of increasing the armaments of the kingdom and enriching its coffers, but withal, by fair and honest means, oppressing not the pious Brâhmaṇas and the valiant Kshatriyas. Every offender was punished and fined according to the magnitude of his offence and with due regard to his age and means, time and place.

Under the watchful eye of these faithful ministers who worked in perfect harmony, neither the capital nor the country was ever disgraced by a liar or a rogue or a goer after other women or an unrighteous man or a wicked one.

These excellent counsellors were ever tastefully dressed and adorned. With a constant eye to the best points of a man's character, they were renowned for their clear insight into the present and the future. While religiously guarding the secrets of the State, they were calm and cool in judgment and well conversant with the proper occasions of the four means of overcoming an enemy.

Through his gifted ministers, Dasaratha won over the hearts of his people and was ever informed of everything that took place at home or abroad. Of faultless character, his feet were ever set on the path of virtue and his heart ever turned away from the path of unrighteousness. No one sought his presence with a prayer and went away disappointed. His friends were numerous and true and his tributaries many; he bowed to none and acknowledged the yoke of none, and he met not any foe-man worthy of his steel. His promises always fell short of the performance; and the rising Orb of Day shone not with greater glory in his golden halo of radiance, than did this king of men, with his noble ministers around him.

CHAPTER VIII.

A CHILDLESS KING.

Of unbounded fame and peerless virtue, king Dasaratha saw the chill winter of age mantling him in its white folds, without any offspring from his loins to cheer his last days.

' His manhood passing, left him lone,
' A childless lord ; for this he grieved ; for this
' Heavy observances he underwent,
' Subduing needs of flesh and oftentimes
' Making high sacrifice to the Gods,
' Where, all for food, at each sixth watch he took
' A little measured dole.'

He had tried every means that the Holy Books recommend, to free himself of this terrible curse of childlessness but in vain. In sheer desperation did he fling his arm on high and cry—

" Oh, ye just gods ! Is there no way from this living death ? " ; and, as if in answer to his heart-cry, there flashed upon him a suggestion, " May be some unwitting sin of mine in the far past stands unwiped. Anyhow, let me celebrate the Horse-sacrifice that washes a man white of all sin and I may yet feel the flower-soft hands of innocent children clasp my aged neck around."

He took counsel of his queens—what greater joy to their barren hearts ? Then, turning to Sumantra who ever stood by, like his good angel, he said, " Let my teacher and priestly guides know that I await their presence here." And when they were all before him—Vasishttha, the mighty, Suyagña, Vāmadēva, Jabāli, Kāsyapa, and other Brāhmaṇas grown old in wisdom and sacred lore—the aged monarch honored them duly and spoke, " Sore am I of heart, from having no son to grace my name. My royal state and its hollow joys are as dust and ashes in my mouth. May be a Horse-sacrifice can remove the unknown obstacle that bars the way to the desire of my heart. What might be your view, reverend sirs ? "

The Brâhmaṇas listened to his sweet words, so extremely consonant with the Aims of Life and warmly applauded his resolve : “ Since your Majesty’s heart is inclined to this virtuous and righteous course, this sacrifice cannot fail to accomplish your object.

‘ Thy piety, thy purity, thy fasts,
 ‘ The largesse of thy hands, thy heart’s wide love,
 ‘ Thy strength of faith, have pleased us.’ .

Let the necessary arrangements be made for it and the consecrated horse be let loose.”

Joy unspeakable spread over the sad heart of the old king and his face shone with a new light ; he turned to his ministers and cried, “ Place yourselves under the directions of the wise Vasishtha and get everything ready for the sacrifice. Start the consecrated horse on its holy round ; let brave warriors go with it and saintly priests. Raise the sacrificial grounds on the northern banks of the swift-coursing Sarayû. Have the necessary rites performed that the Kalpa Sûtras lay down to ward off obstacles from foes seen and unseen. The spiteful Brâhmaṇarakshasas are ever on the lookout to detect the slightest slip and spoil such holy rites ; and a badly performed sacrifice bringeth evil unto the performer. But for such dangers and difficulties, every king would be only too glad to do it. Hence, be it on your heads that the sacrifice gets through without any hitch and as laid down in the Book of Ordinances. I entrust you with the task, for I know none more competent.” “ To hear is to obey” they replied.

The Brâhmaṇas gave him their blessings and withdrew from the council chamber. Qasarâtha reiterated his directions to his ministers and dismissed them. He sought his beloved queens and said to them, “ Preparations are on foot towards the sacrifice ; consecrate yourselves accordingly.” A joyful task was it to them and the faces of the lovely ones shone even as golden lotuses after a long and severe spell of frosty winter.

CHAPTER IX.

RISHYASRINGA—THE INNOCENT.

Then Suniantra, the charioteer of the king and one of his confidential ministers, sought his privacy and said, “Lord, it was given me to be present at an assembly of the Holy Ones, when Sanatkumāra, the Divine Celibate, spoke on the very subject alluded to by the learned Brāhmaṇas not long ago.

The divine Kāsyapa has a son, of unrivalled fame, by name Vibhāndaka, and to him will be born a child, Rishyasringa so called. Spending all his days in the lonely forest, his life's sphere will for some years be confined to cheerful service upon his renowned father and reverential tending of the Sacred Fires; and then, his Bramhacharya will receive a violent shock.

It will come to pass that a famous king, Rōmapāda, will rule over Anga. Some neglect of his kingly duties will inflict a drought in his dominions, entailing much misery on all beings therein, men and beasts. His heart bleeding at the sight of the suffering millions, he will send for Brāhmaṇas grown grey with age and wisdom and say ‘Reverend sirs! you have sounded the depths of knowledge, lay and clerical and have a profound acquaintance with the world and its ways. Advise me some rite whereby this crime of mine may be expiated and the land be freed of this curse that sits upon it.’ Then the Brāhmaṇas, conversant with the Holy Books, will reply ‘Your Majesty! manage any way to get down here Rishyasringa, the son of Vibhāndaka and give him your daughter Sānta for a wife, and you will have rain.’

‘How shall I compass it?’ the king will say to himself ‘well, the Brāhmaṇas alone know best how to bring down one of their class’ and will beseech his chaplain and his ministers to go bring him the young ascetic.

With faces blanched with fear, they will cry out, 'Not so. Your Majesty will pardon us this unseemly refusal ; but we dare not go. Vibhāndaka's curse is too terrible to think of. But we will suggest to you another plan whereby you can bring his son down here without affecting his Brahmacharya and have rain.'

The king will follow their advice and get him down through courtesans and give him his daughter Sāntā for a wife. So said Sanatkumāra, and Rishyasringa, your son-in-law as well, will take the requisite measures to procure you an offspring."

Dasaratha drank in with eager ears the glad news and asked, " Well, Sumantra, how was it that Rōmapāda induced Rishyasringa to leave his forest-home and visit his dominions ? "

CHAPTER X.

RISHYASRINGA—THE INNOCENT—(*continued*).

Questioned thus, Sumantra went on, “The priests spoke to the king through his ministers, ‘Follow our advice and you will have your wish. That ascetic has never been outside his native forests. The faithful discharge of his duties and the study of the Scriptures take up all his time. The face of woman is a new sight to him ; much less knows he her nature, her ways and her wiles, nor the liquid fire that her looks send along a man’s veins. We will cloud his senses by sweet music, fine perfumes, delicious food, flowery soft touch and sights that captivate the eye and we are sure to bring him over here. Make up your mind to follow our plan. Send lovely courtesans on this business ; bribe them well by rich presents of silk and clothes, ornaments and money and they can never fail to have him at their heels.’ ‘Do as seems to you best’ said the king to them ; and deeming it unseemly that they should hold any conversation with courtesans, they directed the ministers to give them the necessary instructions.

Accordingly the girls went to the forest and hung about the cottage of Vibhāndaka, lying in wait for a chance to meet his son alone—the wise young man who rarely left his hermitage, so engrossed was he in attendance upon his father.

‘In the woods he dwelled
‘That sinless saint, pious and mild and pure,
‘Sad-minded, solitary ; for his eyes
‘Had never lighted on a human face
‘Except his sire, Vibhāndaka’s ; and thus,
‘Always young Rishyasringa’s heart was set
‘On sanctities.’

As fortune or misfortune would have it, that day he came out of his abode and to the very place where these

damsels had set a snare to entrap his unwary self. They joyfully approached him with bright looks of welcome and cooed to him with alluring smiles. ‘ Holy one, who art thou ? And how is it that you have chosen to make this dark and dreary forest your home ? ’

‘ Take you joy to dwell
‘ All lonely in this hermitage ? ’

Their very forms and features were new to him and he obligingly replied, ‘ Lovely beings ! I am the son of the holy Vibhāndaka ; and Rishyasringa he calls me. I have laid up no inconsiderable merit by my religious austerities. Yonder is my cottage and I would be extremely delighted to receive you there and give you the best welcome in my power.’

The girls smiled their assent and went with him. There he offered them water to wash and drink, and delicious fruits and roots to eat. They received them with joyful thanks and desirous to leave the place before the terrible Vibhāndaka returned, said to him, ‘ Fair Sir ! you will not refuse to taste of the fruits we have brought for you.’ They offered him every variety of sweet and toothsome delicacies, which he partook of with unfeigned delight and wonder, for never before had he seen such sweet and lovely fruits :

‘ And at the last
‘ Danced to his side, and for a moment set
‘ Palm to his palm, and limb to limb, and lip
‘ To trembling lip, and breast to beating breast.’

The girls then took leave of him saying ‘ Holy Sir ! allow us to depart to our homes ; for we are close upon the hour of prayer and worship.’

And the young ascetic, his senses all in a whirl at the sight of their divinely beautiful forms, by the delicious sweetness of the fruits they gave him, by the subtle fragrance that their persons and dress exhaled, by the heart ravishing strains of their music and the dreamy languor of their looks and not the least by their passion-

ate kisses and embraces, that sent a stream of molten lava through his veins, found his life miserable away from them, and yearned for the moment when he would meet them again.

' He stood

' As one some dream of glory leaves distraught,

' Spiritless; then within his lonely cell

' Sate, with his face fixed through many silent hours,

' Their beauties meditating.'

After a time the restlessness that took possession of him drove him to the spot where he came upon them the day before and with eager eyes he scanned the road they took.

They failed him not and having made sure that they had lured him into their man-trap, said to him laughingly ' Light of our eyes! you do us a great injustice in that you do not return our visit to you. Come and see us where we live. You will find there nicer fruits than those we gave you yesterday. And you can be sure of a warmer welcome at our hermitage.'

He took their words for gospel truth and only too glad was he to go with them. The moment his feet touched the soil of Anga,

' Great Indra's wrath was gone and the rain

' Burst over the land and drenched the thirsty fields.'

And the people rejoiced thereat. The king met his welcome visitor that brought with him the much-prayed-for rains and reverentially touching his feet with his head, said with joined palms, ' Holy One ! May an unworthy servant of thine sue for pardon for having induced thee by an unworthy ruse to visit my kingdom? May he pray of thee to save him from the terrible wrath of thy saintly sire ? ' Rishyasringa did not disappoint him ; and Rōmapāda took him to his palace and joyfully gave him his daughter, Sāntā, for a wife. The sage abode with him thereafter, his least wishes anticipated and every desire of his heart gratified.

CHAPTER XI.

DASARATHA AND RISHYASRINGA

‘ Of the illustrious line of Ikshwâku will spring a righteous monarch, by name Dasaratha, who aye kept his plighted word. Rômapâda, the lord of Anga, and a very dear friend of Dasaratha, will be blessed with a daughter, Sântâ so named, whose loveliness will be matched only by her virtue. And to him will the ruler of Ayôdhyâ go and say, ‘ Oh, my dear friend ! my heart danceth not to the happy music of boyish prattle and innocent laughter. Speak thou to Rishyasringa for me and request him to go out to my capital to devise some rite whereby

‘ I may have

‘ Fair babes, continuers of my royal line.’

And Rômapâda, taking counsel but with his own generous heart, will persuade Rishyasringa and Sântâ to go over with his friend, assured beyond a doubt that his son-in-law will not fail to gladden the old king’s heart by realising his long-cherished wishes. Whereupon Dasaratha will, in all humility, pray to the sage to take the necessary steps to free him of his curse of childlessness and secure him a place in the Regions of the Blessed. Rishyasringa will not fail him and four sons of immeasurable might and boundless fame will call the happy Dasaratha their sire and continue his line on earth for long ages to come.’

Thus spoke the Divine One, even Sanatkumâra, for whom the past, the present, and the future have no secrets; and it was in the last Kritayuga. Now I suggest that your Majesty will do well to go to the sage in person, you and your friends, kinsmen, armies and attendants; offer him your humblest respects and entreat him to go over with you.”

So spake the favoured one; whereat Dasaratha took thoughtful counsel with Vasishtha and set out for the

dominions of Rōmapāda. They had a long and pleasant journey through happy villages and laughing fields, over high hills and dark valleys, through trackless woods and across roaring waters and arrived at the capital of the king, who gave a hearty welcome to his old friend, his queens and his ministers.

With pride and joy, he lost no time in acquainting Rishyasringa with the warm friendship that existed between him and Dasaratha and with the relation Sāntā occupied to him. The sage honoured him duly as the father of his dear wife ; and the ruler of Ayōdhyā could not take his wondering eyes off the young Rishi, whose spiritual lustre blazed even as the smokeless flame.

A week or so of happy hospitality and the childless king sought the privacy of Rōmapāda and said “ My old friend and true ! I would like that you allow me to take away Sāntā and her husband to Ayōdhyā. They would serve a great purpose of mine.”

“ Glad am I ” exclaimed Rōmapāda, “ in that you have at last found something that I can do for you ” ; and taking his son-in-law aside, he said to him, “ My valued friend Dasaratha, my other self, wants you and your wife to stay with him awhile at his place ; and it will gladden my heart ever so much if you could do so.” “ Nothing would give me greater pleasure,” was the answer of the sage, accompanied with an enigmatic smile.

And the lord of Ayōdhyā, now all haste to go back to his capital, embraced Rōmapāda warmly and took reluctant leave of him, with a promise to meet at no long time. He set his face towards Ayōdhyā and calling unto his presence swift messengers, “ Go ye,” said he, “ in advance and see to it that the city puts on her brightest look. Let the roads be swept clean and the dust laid. Let the streets and houses be gaily decked with flags, streamers, banners, and garlands. Let arches welcome us at every turn and sweet perfumes sail along the soft breeze.”

And Dasaraiha entered Ayodhya to the sweet sounds of martial music and the joyful shouts of the people, dressed in their brightest and their best, who gave a hearty welcome to their beloved monarch and his honoured friend. The royal host offered unto his reverend guest the highest honours of his house and led him to the inner apartments, while his old heart danced with joy, as if its long-deferred hopes were already realized to the utmost. His ladies were overjoyed to have Santā once more among them after so long an absence ; while she, happy in the unfeigned love of her friends and kinsfolk and of her royal father, abode with him for a while, ever devotedly ministering to the comforts of her saintly husband.

CHAPTER XII.

THE HORSE-SACRIFICE RESOLVED UPON.

Spring came on, never too soon, the brightest jewel that ever shines in the crown of the Lord of Months. And upon Dasaratha came the desire to perform the sacrifice, in whose womb lay his future, his joys, his hopes, his peace here and hereafter. He concluded to go through the horse-sacrifice as a necessary preliminary and purificatory rite and with folded palms prayed Rishyasringa of golden lustre, to accept the office of Brahma during the preparatory Sangrahanî. "Be it so," replied the sage, "make the necessary arrangements and let the sacrificial horse go his round over the earth."

Dasaratha turned to Sumantra and said "Reverently invite to the holy rite Suyagña, Vāmadēva, Jābāli, Kāsyapa, Vasishtha, our royal chaplain and other Brāhmaṇas skilled in the mysteries of the sacrifices and convey them here on suitable vehicles,;" which he did. The king honored them as they deserved and spake "Reverend Sirs! Sore is my spirit, in that my old age is not blessed with a child to climb upon my knees. I shall perform a horse-sacrifice to expiate this sin of mine, conscious or otherwise, that frustrates for me my dearest hopes and wishes." Vasishtha and his friends applauded the righteous resolve and replied: "Since thy heart is righteously inclined towards this rite, thou shalt, of a surety, be blessed with four sons of mighty arms and matchless fame. So, lose no time in making the necessary arrangements therefor."

Dasaratha turned to his ministers and said "See that the directions of my teacher are carried out to the very letter. Let everything be in readiness to begin the rite and loose the sacrificial horse to go his round, with skilled priests and a strong army to accompany it. Lay out the sacrificial grounds on the northern bank of the Sarayū

and have the necessary protective rites performed. If these sacrifices could be conducted easily and without any mishap, every king would but too gladly lay claim to the honour. But, cunning Brahma-râkshasas are ever on the watch to detect any slight flaw in these rites and it is not an easy thing to baffle their vigilance, skilled as they are in the sacrificial mysteries. I pray you, than whom I know none more competent, to enable me to perform this sacrifice of mine without a hitch and in conformity with the rules laid down for the same."

"On our heads and eyes be it," they made low reply.

The Sângrahani was over, the horse let loose ; and the assembled Brâhmañas were loud in their praises of the good king, whose heart was ever set on Dharma. They then took leave of the happy Dasaratha, who reiterated his orders to his ministers and retired to his apartments.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HORSE-SACRIFICE BEGUN.

A year passed by and Spring gladdened again the hearts of men ; and on the full moon day, *Dasaratha* went to the sacrificial grounds to begin the Horse-sacrifice. He bowed himself low before *Vasishtha*, even unto the ground and said to him in all reverence, “Holy One ! thou art my guide, philosopher and friend. Thy words are a lamp unto my feet and a light upon my path. I pray thee to perform for me this sacrifice duly and without the least flaw. No room should be given to the evil-minded Rākshasas to interfere with it, the materials, the rites or the deities. On thee rests the responsibility of this grand rite.” “Well, it shall be even as you desire,” rejoined *Vasishtha*.

He then sent for Brāhmaṇas, skilled in the performance of every kind of sacrifice, for the officers of the king and for the servants placed at his disposal to collect the materials therefor ; for the makers of the sacrificial bricks and altars ; for the carpenters, who prepare sacrificial posts, ladles, spoons, pots and other implements ; for the diggers of tanks and wells ; for skilled accountants ; for painters, sculptors and architects ; for professors in the art of dancing and pantomime ; and for priests deep in the mysteries of sacrificial art, learned and of pure lives ; and said to them, “Oh priests, watch ye every detail of the sacrifice and see that nothing goes amiss. Bricklayers ! get ready hundreds and thousands of sacrificial bricks. Servants ! erect mansions to receive and accommodate the royal guests, broad and high, proof against wind and rain ; and charming residences for the Brāhmaṇas, for our townspeople and for those that come from the various parts of our vast kingdom. Look to it that these are amply stored with provisions of every kind, sweet and wholesome, and with every other requirement.

And you, officers of the king ! take good heed that you receive every one kindly and honor him duly with garlands and sweet perfumes. Forget not the masons, the sculptors, the architects, the servants and those that are set to supervise these arrangements. Never show them the slightest sign of disrespect or neglect, but extend unto every one your heartiest welcome. Entertain them right royally and let them have everything they want, food, clothing and money. Keep your eye on every class of men and let it be upon your heads that they go away mightily satisfied. Beware, I say, of offending any one, be he the lowest of the low, through anger, enmity, familiarity or avarice. Ever keep before your minds the love you bear to me and to your king and deserve the same at our hands, by discharging your respective duties to your utmost, and without the slightest room for complaint or remark."

And they all replied with one voice, " Holiest of sages ! Upon our heads be your orders ; we shall carry them out to the very letter."

Vasishtha then turned himself towards Sumantra and said, " Send out respectful invitations to every righteous king on the face of the Earth and to the men of note in all grades of society. Do thou request in person the gracious presence of the valiant Janaka, the lord of Mithila, bound to our king by ties of relationship, and deep in the knowledge of the Vēdas and the Sāstras ; of the sweet spoken Lord of Kāśī, also a dear friend of Dasaratha ; of the ruler of Kēkaya, our king's father-in-law and a paragon of virtue, and his son ; and last, but not the least, of the thrice fortunate Rōmapāda, the glorious king of Anga, one of the dearest friends of our master ; and send thou to invite hither the kings of Sindhu, Sauvira, Saurāshtra and of the numerous kingdoms in the south, east and west and every other royal friend of our monarch."

And Sumantra did so.

Then, the officers and servants deputed by Vasishtha to look after the various details of the sacrifice, reported unto

him that they had done their work skilfully and thoroughly. Vasishtha dismissed them with this last piece of advice and—warning. “Whatever you give, give it with a cheerful heart and a pleasant smile. An ungracious gift brings evil upon the giver—our king. Remember and fail not.”

In a short time the kings of the Earth came to the capital of Dasaratha with valuable presents of costly gems and articles rare. Then Vasishtha addressed himself to the king and said, “Noble king! the rulers of the Earth are come unto your sacrifice, every one of them, and I have received them right royally. Your officers have made every necessary arrangement for the rite. The sacrificial grounds are ready to receive your Majesty and resemble the happiest creations of celestial architects. May it please your Majesty to come and have a look at them?”

And, at an auspicious moment, Dasaratha set out for the sacrificial grounds along with Vasishtha and Vāmadēva. Then began the great Horse-sacrifice, under the watchful eye of Vasishtha, Rishyasringa and the other sages, who saw that nothing went amiss.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HORSE-SACRIFICE (*Concluded*).

The horse, that was sent to make the round of the earth, came back safe and victorious. And on the sacrificial grounds erected on the banks of the Sarayû, priests, who had sounded the depths of the Vêdas, went through the rites of Pravargya, Upasada, and other incidental offerings, as laid down in the Mîmâmsa and the Srauta Sûtras. They adored the Gods that preside over the various details of the sacrifice; during the morning Savana, they invited Indra to partake of his portion of the offering and hymned high the sin-destroying Sôma; and the two other Savanas were properly gone through in their turn.

Every part of the great sacrifice was performed without any defect or interruption; the priests omitted nothing, they altered nothing; the Mantras were chanted without any fault of measure or intonation.

And all the days the sacrifice went on, you could come upon none who was afflicted with fatigue, hunger or thirst; nor an unlettered man; nor one but had a hundred disciples. The Brâhmaṇas, the sages, the sky-clad, the old, the infirm, the sick, the boys and the women were ever seen feeding heartily. The viands were so sweet and delicious that, no sooner you rose full from a meal than the desire came upon you to sit down to it again; and you regretted the limited capacity of your stomach. The king was feeding countless millions; but he was never satisfied and ever blamed himself for his inability to give more. So, he gave directions to the superintendents that in every part of the vast grounds food and clothing should be distributed, without stint, to those that might ask for it. In the numerous kitchens the cooks piled up day after day huge hills of food of every kind; they were marvels of the culinary art and very

soon disappeared down the joyful throats of the untold millions that came from the various quarters of the earth to view that famous rite. And Brāhmaṇas, neatly dressed and gaily decked, served the guests, while many others assisted them. They rose from the meal all too reluctantly and praised in no measured terms the excellence of the feast and the well appointed service. "Our delight and joy knows no bounds, your majesty!" cried they, "may every happiness be thine." And the words were sweet unto his ears.

During the intervals of the sacrifice, Brāhmaṇas of great learning and high powers of speech, entered into various polemical discussions with one another, with a view to win laurels on that memorable occasion.

On each day of the sacrifice, during the three Savanas, Brāhmaṇas skilled in the spreading of the sacred grass, conducted the rites presided over by Umā and the other deities. Among those that took part in the sacrifice, there was none who was not a master of the Vēdas and the Vēdāngas, nor any who had not kept the Chāndrāyana and the other vows; nor one who had not a profound and varied acquaintance with the Sāstras; nor could your eye rest in the king's audience on any Brāhmaṇa who was not an able disputant.

And when they came to that part of the sacrifice where the sacrificial posts were planted, they drove into the ground twenty one posts at arm's length from one another, near the altar place of Agni. A post of Śleshmātaka, with another of Dēvadāru to the north and south of it; again, three Bilva posts north and south of the first three; and again three mahogany posts north and south of these fifteen. They were made of tough flawless wood, each five hundred and four inches long and octagonal in shape. They were smoothly planed; and Brāhmaṇas well versed in the theroy and the art of sacrifice, decked them with bands of gold, flowers, perfumes and rich cloths. Planted in rows of seven, they looked not unlike the constellation of the Great Bear.

Before they were planted, skilled Brâhmaṇas laid out the fire-altar of bricks specially prepared according to the Sûtras ; it was eighteen stones high and shaped like the Garuda, facing the East, with spread tail and wings adorned with golden plates.

To the posts were bound, as enjoined in the rules of sacrifice, serpents and birds dedicated to Indra and to the other deities. And on the occasion of the offering up of the animals, the consecrated horse and about three hundred other animals were tied to the posts—land-living and aquatic, tame and wild, beasts of the wood and fowls of the air.

On the spot known as Sâmîtra, (slaughtering-ground) the queens of Dasaratha sprinkled the dead horse with consecrated water, reciting the appropriate Mantras, went round it right and left, and with a gold needle marked on its stomach the three places for the priests to cut at. Then, Kausalyâ, with a view to lay up great merit, abode for a night with the horse and felt no repugnance at touching the carcass.

The chief priests Brahma, Hotâ, Adhwaryu and Udgâta took by the hand the Mahishi, Vâvâta, Pâlakali, and Parivritti, given them as presents by the king and handed them back to him, receiving rich gifts in exchange.

Thereafter, the Adhwaryu cut out that part of the horse known as Têjini, that corresponds to the Vapâ of other animals and offered it to the God of Fire on plaited water-reeds. The king smelt of the smoke and his sins were washed away ; and after him, the eleven other priests offered into the fire with appropriate rites the various parts of the horse.

The horse-sacrifice extends over many days and includes several complicated rituals, of which three are the most important. On the first day, the Agnishtôma, with four Stomas ; on the second, the Ukthya ; on the third, the Atirâtra ; and the remaining days were given up to Jyotishtôma, Âyushtôma, the two Atirâtras, Abhi-

jit, Visvajit and Aptōryama; and every one of them, in strict conformity with the rules laid down for it and with heart-felt good will to the performer.

Thus did Dasaratha perform this grand sacrifice, revealed to the world by Brahma, successfully and without omitting the least detail; and with a glad heart did he present the Hōtā, the Adhwaryu, the Brahma and the Udgātā with his dominions on the East, West, South and North respectively. They accepted them joyfully and said to the king, "Your Majesty! religious observances, the study of the Holy Writ and the teaching thereof come easier to us and are more congenial than the government of kingdoms. What shall we do with them? You are fitted for the task and God has specially placed you in the world therefor. So, take these back and give us in return gold and gems, horses and cattle." And Dasaratha gave to every one of them ten lacs of kine, ten crores of gold coins, and four of silver, which they took to Rishyasringa and Vasishtha to equitably divide among them. They received their shares gladly and said to the king, "We are more than satisfied."

Dasaratha distributed untold wealth among the poor; and a Brāhmaṇa, who made bold to approach him with a request for something more, was rewarded with the diamond bracelet on his arm. With tears of joy coursing down his aged cheeks, the monarch reverently touched the ground with his forehead before the assembled multitudes, whose contentment and joy knew no bounds, while the priests and the Brāhmaṇas spoke their heart-felt blessings in the grand and majestic chants of the Vēdic hymns.

The heart of the old king danced with joy in that he had successfully performed the famous horse-sacrifice, so difficult for ordinary monarchs. It burnt away the sins that stood in the way of his being blessed with an offspring and opened to him wide the gates of heaven. He then approached Rishyasringa and prayed to him

with joined palms, "Holy Sir! deign to point out to me the means whereby I could have a child to cheer my old age."

"Let not thy noble heart be cast down," replied the sage. "Four sons will be born unto you, whose eternal glory will illumine your noble line. And mine be the care to bring about the happy event."

CHAPTER XV.

THE GODS TAKE REFUGE WITH THE LORD.

Then, Rishyasringa, whose mind was capacious enough to receive and retain the numerous Sâkhâs of the Vâdas and who was a thorough master of the mysteries connected therewith, after long and earnest thought, hit upon the most effective method of realising the king's wishes. With a glad face he turned to him and said, "Now shall I perform for you an Ishti consecrated by the Atharvana Mantras, that will not fail to get you a son." And in the course of the rite, he made an offering in the fire, accompanied by powerful Vedic Mantras.

Meanwhile, the various Angelic Presences that came down to the horse-sacrifice to receive their portions of the offerings, approached their chief, the Lotus-born One, and said, "Lord! A Râkshasa, Râvana by name, has won your favour by his wonderful austerities and has been blessed with many mighty boons in consequence; and we, poor souls, have to pay for it. Bound by our respect for the giver of those boons, we have to put up, without a murmur, with his unheard-of cruelties. The three worlds tremble at his name; he will, in no time, drive away from their thrones Indra and the other Regents of the spheres and occupy them himself. Strong in the strength of his boons, he bids defiance to every one, sages and Brâhmaṇas, Yakshas and Gandharvas, Dêvas and Asuras and grinds them low. The Sun draws in his heat when he shines on the Demon and adjusts his warmth to his taste; the Wind-God is afraid to blow hard through his gardens, lest the flowers therein should fall off the trees and creepers and anger Râvana when he is disporting himself there; the roaring Ocean with his mutinous waves, stands tongue-tied with fear at his approach; his fierce looks strike dire terror into our hearts and we drag on lives of misery and fear. Seek thou some means to relieve us from this living terror."

"Shining Ones!" replied Brahma, "the wicked wretch prayed of me immortality from the Dêvas, the Gandharvas and the Râkshasas and *that* I granted him. But, fortunately for you, he has omitted to ask it from men, as being too far beneath his fear and notice. *There* is his weak point and he should be made to meet his death at the hands of man."

The hearts of the sages and the gods danced for very joy at this glad news; and they rejoiced as if the hour of their deliverance was already at hand.

Then there appeared before their delighted eyes the Lord Vishnû, the ruler of the Universe and the living God in the hearts of all beings. In His supreme effulgence stood He, His face resplendent with the thought that the time had come for Him to destroy the wicked and bring peace and comfort to the hearts of the good and the righteous. He ever bears in His hands the conch and the discus, to extend His protection to those that take refuge in Him. Brahma advanced to reverence Him, his mind actively engaged with the prayer he meant to place before Him. Then the Sons of Light hymned Him high and with bent heads and joined palms cried, "We pray Thee that Thou deign to be born as four sons unto Dasaratha, of righteous heart and saintly life—the Lord of Ayôdhya, from whom none ever ask in vain. Do Thou take human form through his three queens, who are even as the mortal embodiments of Hrî, Srl and Kirti, and destroy the impious One, even Râvana. He is the scourge and the terror of all beings and is not to meet his death at the hands of any but man. Proud of his might and prouder still of the boons he had won of Brahma, he tramples on all of us, gods and sages, Yakshas and Gandharvas, Kinnaras and men alike. The lovely Apsarasas that disport themselves in the charming groves of our Nandana are the special objects of his persecutions. We, the denizens of the three worlds, pray his death at Thy hands and take our refuge in Thee. Thou art our only stay and support, and

we pray that Thou wilt be pleased to come down on Earth to destroy the wicked wights, Rāvana, Indrajit, Lāvana and certain wicked Gandharvas."

Then, unto the expectant Brahma and the attendant celestial host, spake the World-honoured One, Vishṇu, the Lord of Lords, "Fear not, my children. All good betide you. I shall come down among men as the son of Dasaratha and shall slay in dreadful battle Rāvana, that terror of yours and of every devout and virtuous soul; nay, his sons, grandsons, friends, and kinsmen even unto the last remove. And mortal years 11000 shall I reign over the Earth, restoring Law and Order."

He promised them safety from their enemy and a speedy deliverance to their miseries; and resolved to manifest Himself as the sons of Dasaratha, whose saintly virtues attracted Him to take birth in his family. Far, far above the mortal changes known as birth and death, Himself the Goal and the End of all desires and efforts, human and divine, yet He made up His mind to limit His illimitable essence and come down into this dark and sinful world of ours, that the 'wicked might cease from troubling and the weary be at rest.'

Then, the Shining Ones, the Gandharvas, the Rudras and the Apsarasas, sang his divine glory and repeated their prayer, "Soul of Compassion! Lord of infinite Mercy! save us from the wrath and oppression of the terrible Rāvana; slay him in battle dire, him and his kin, him and his countless hosts. Naturally endowed with no inconsiderable degree of pride and might, he has become insufferably so, through the boons conferred on him by Brahma. The good and the righteous cry out against him and raise tear-dimmed eyes and trembling hands in mute appeal to Thee for deliverance and protection. Thy work accomplished, come Thou back, light of heart, unto Thy radiant seat on high, far beyond the utmost dreams of poor we, unto Vaikuntha, the eternal world where desire is not nor hatred."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DIVINE PÂYASA.

To which the Lord Nârâyana replied in feigned ignorance (what is it He knows not !) “ Well, my children, I shall do even as you wish. But I do not see clearly the easiest and most effective method of bringing about his death. You have thought over it long and deeply, and may be you can suggest the best course.”

The Dêvas bowed low before the Eternal One and rejoined, “ Lord ! the sinful wretch contrived to win the favour of Brahma, the foremost and the best of us all ; who, pleased by his terrible austerities, granted him immunity from death at the hands of every one in all the worlds, above and below. But, he has, in the height of his contempt, omitted men from his list. Safe, through his boons, from every object in the universe, as he fondly thinks, his pride is equalled but by his cruelties. The groans of the insulted Dêvas and the shrieks of the ravished damsels cry out against him and the bleached skeletons of holy sages, whom he had murdered in cold blood. *Man and man alone* is his fate ; and from *him* he meets his death. Do Thou take human form and slay him in battle dire.”

Then said the Lord Vishnu, “ I shall come down among men, as the son of Dasaratha, who is even now performing a holy rite to get a boy in his old age.” He ended and having given leave to the assembled celestial hosts to depart, vanished then and there, lauded by the rejoicing Dêvas.

Soon after, Rishyasringa, in the course of the rite he was conducting, made an offering unto the Fire Âhavanya, when there rose out of it a radiant Presence of vast proportions. Like a towering peak he stood ; and the blazing Fire or the noonday sun was as nothing before the blinding glory of that mighty One. His face was fiery red

and the hair upon it was of the hue of molten gold, even as the tawny mane of the monarch of the forest. Clad in robes of reddish black, his beautifully proportioned limbs were adorned with lovely ornaments. Of inconceivable might and power, even as the royal tiger in the flush of his strength and fierceness, his voice sounded as the great war drums that fill the warrior's heart with fire and energy. His hands were closed around a golden vessel of exquisite workmanship, silver-covered, as lovingly as ever a lover's arms were twined round the neck of his beloved ; and this was full of divine Pāyasa. He turned to the king and said, " I am a man sent to you by the Four-faced One, Brahma."

Dasaratha replied with folded hands, " Lord ! Hast thy journey hither been a pleasant one ? What does my lord want with his servant ? "

" Only this," said the Radiant One, " the gods are pleased with thee and thy Horse-sacrifice and Putrēshṭi and have sent thee this Pāyasa. It confers glory and weal and, more than anything else, the son you so much yearn for. Accept it ; let your queens partake of it and sons four shall be thine. This is what you have toiled for, ever so long, through horse-sacrifice and vows innumerable."

" Thy commands shall be obeyed," replied the king, in awe and reverence ; and receiving the Pāyasa sent him by the Dēvas, he bowed low unto the Divine Messenger and went round him in respect ; and his heart leaped for very joy, even as that of a beggar that has come upon a precious treasure. And the mighty Being, having accomplished his mission, disappeared into the fire from which he sprang.

Thereafter, the king concluded the rite, and retiring to his apartments, said to his queens, " This divine Pāyasa, the gift of the celestials, will bear you sons. Do you partake of it." And their faces shone thereat, even as the sky illuminated by the rays of the autumn moon.

He then distributed it among them thus:—One-half to Kausalyâ, one-fourth to Sumîtrâ and one-eighth to Kaikêyi. But, to give the remaining one-eighth to her would be to place her on a level with Sumîtra, her elder, and that should never be; so he divided it equally between the two. The queens were highly satisfied with his distribution of the Pâyasa and deemed themselves blessed in being allowed to partake of it. They ate of it and shone brighter throughout the period of pregnancy than the smokeless fire or the brilliant sun. And the old king, saw it; his heart was lifted of its weight of sorrow and he rejoiced even as the great Indra, honoured in heaven by the Siddhas and the Sages.

CHAPTER XVII

THE COMING DOWN OF THE GODS.

When the Lord Vishnu had taken the preliminary steps to come down as the son of Dasaratha, the Lotus-born One, from whom the future is not hid, said to the Dévas, "The Lord goes down among men in pursuance of His promise to us and for our good. Send ye down, from your essences, sons to assist Him in His fight with Ravana; choose ye fit vehicles among the Apsarasas and Gandharvas and beget sons ape-like in form. Capable of assuming any shape at will they shall be masters of the arts of illusion, like unto the Wind-God in speed and unto the Supreme Vishnu in might, invulnerable and unconquerable, with the strength of fierce lions in them and endued with the terrible energy of all the Astras, immortal, even as the celestials who have drunk of Ambrosia, intelligent, conversant with every rule of morality and skilful in adopting the means to the ends.

"Once, when I indulged in a deep yawn, I brought forth a mighty bear, Jambavân by name, of course with an eye to future contingencies."

And in cheerful obedience to his commands, the sages, the Siddhas, the Vidyâdharas, the Uragas, the Châranas and the other celestial orders, brought forth sons of their own essence, monkeys that roamed the woods. The great Indra gave birth to Vâli, the monarch of the monkeys, of vast proportions even as the Mount Mahendra. The Sun-God begat Sugrîva; Brihaspati begat Târa, the wisest and the foremost of the monkey host; Kubêra begat Gândhamâdhana, like unto him in wealth; Visvakarma begat Nala; Agni begat Nila, radiant even as his sire and excelling the other monkeys by his glory, splendour and valor; the handsome Aswins begat Mainda and Dwividâ, no less beautiful than their sires; Varuna begat Sushêna; Parjanya, the God of Rain, begat Sarabha, of vast strength;

Vâyu begat Hanumân, like unto Garuda in speed and of adamantine body, impervious even to the Vajra.

Thus, countless myriads of apes, baboons, monkeys and bears came down on Earth to assist the Lord in exterminating Râvana and his wicked brood. Their strength was immeasurable ; they could take any form they liked ; of vast bulk like unto Mêru or Mandara, resembling their sires in shape and height, some were born of monkey mothers, some of bears, some of Apsarasas, some of Vidyâdhara maidens and some of Nâgas and Gandharvas ; some were born of celestial fathers, some of sages, some of Gandharvas, some of Garuda and the feathered race, some of Yakshas, some of Vâsuki and the others of Nâgas ; some of Siddhas, some of Vidyâdhara and some of Uragas.

Proud in their strength even as lions and tigers, fighting with rocks, trees, teeth and claws, they could shatter the strongest tree and uproot the hugest mountain ; their speed was such that the mighty Lord of the Rivers, was shaken to his very bottom ; with a blow of their feet they could rend the solid Earth in twain ; they could lightly leap across the vast oceans, course along the sky and catch by the hair the fleet-footed clouds ; they could fly away in sport with huge elephants that range the forests in the pride of their strength ; their roars could cause the most powerful birds to drop down dead from their dizzy home among the clouds.

These mighty beings ranged the earth and the sky ; and their seed grew and grew by hundreds and by thousands and covered the face of the globe. Some of them lived along the sides of Rikshawân and other mountains, in dark forests and lonely woods, on the banks of charming lakes and swift-coursing rivers, on the high hills and in the low vales.

All of them recognised as their monarchs, the brothers Vali and Sugriva, the king and the heir-apparent, born of Indra and Sûrya ; their leaders were Nala, Nîla, Hanumân

and other mighty monkeys. Vāli extended his powerful arm over them and under its shadow lived, in peace and prosperity, the high-minded and valiant apes and monkeys, bears and baboons. And these mighty beings, of various shapes and features, and of vast and fearful bulk, like unto huge mountain peaks or cloud-banks, came down into the world to help the Lord in His noble task and darkened the broad bosom of the Earth, and its numerous mountains and valleys, hills and dales, forests and woodlands.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE COMING OF THE LORD

The various celestial hosts that came down to receive their offerings during the Horse-sacrifice departed to their respective worlds after the Ishti was over.

The king and his queens freed themselves from the consecratory vow; and he sent away, with all honors, the many kings that had graced him with their presence. They saluted Vasishtha and the other sages and left for their respective kingdoms, their troops flashing with gold and gems and gay apparel, the royal gift of their noble host.

Dasaratha returned to his capital, in the company of Vasishtha and his brother sages, his queens, his armies and his servants following him in their countless conveyances. Then Rishyasringa and his wife took leave of Dasaratha and along with them Rōmapāda. Having dismissed his guests, the king abode in his capital, his hopes realised and his thoughts ever intent on the approaching birth of his sons.

Twice six months had rolled away since the great sacrifice was over and, in the first month of the New Year, on the ninth day of the bright fortnight, the Lord of the worlds chose to take human form and sent down half of His essence as the son of Kausalyā (thenceforth to be known as Rāma), the world-honored One, the crowning glory of the grand line of Ikshwāku, and the sum of all perfections. The constellation Punarvasu, of which Aditi was the regent, was chosen to preside at his birth. The Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn were in ascension in their respective houses. Aries, Capricornus, Cancer, Pisces and the Libra, Jupiter and the Moon were in conjunction; the rising sign was Cancer. And Kausalyā shone with unparalleled effulgence, even as Aditi

when she gave birth to Indra, the lord of the Shining Ones, the Vajra-wielder.

Bharata was born of Kaikēyi, under the constellation Pushya, when Pisces was the rising sign. He had in him one-eighth of the Divine Essence, and was the embodiment of every excellence, and of never-failing prowess.

Under the asterism Aslēsha, when Cancer was the rising sign, were born unto Sumitra two sons, Lakshmana, and Satrughna, valiant and well-skilled in the science of arms, human and divine. They were twins; Lakshmana had in him one-fourth and Satrughna one-eighth of the Divine Essence. Resembling in lustre the two asterisms Pūrvā and Uttara Bhādrapadā, they were beautifully matched.

Sweetly sang the Gandharvas, and gaily danced the Apsarasas; the celestial drums beat merrily and the flowers of Heaven rained on Earth when the Divine Four came down upon it. The capital and the kingdom was one scene of mirth and jollity; and it was a happy day. The high roads were crowded with bright citizens, dancers and dancing masters; the streets echoed to gay songs and sweet musical instruments, and the loud plaudits of bards, genealogists and heralds. The old king, beside himself with joy, gave away untold wealth and kine to Brāhmaṇas and rich presents to the bards and minstrels.

On the thirteenth day of their birth the holy Vasishtha joyfully gave them names. The son of Kausalyā he called Rāma; Kaikēyi's son answered to Bharata; and the twins from the womb of Sumitra, he named the elder Lakshmana, and the younger Satrughna. On that occasion the king caused numerous Brāhmaṇas to be fed, both in his capital and in his kingdom and gave away costly gems and rich gifts.

In due time, the boys passed through the sacraments laid down for the twice-born, Annaprāṣāna, Choula and Upanayana.

Of them, Rāma the eldest, who towered above the rest, was a perennial source of delight to his sire and even as the Lotus-born One, the darling of all beings. Very soon they mastered the Vēdas and the Vedāngas ; brave and wise, endowed with every virtue, they were ever intent upon doing good to others. Among them, Rāma was the brightest and shone radiant. Of unfailing powers, a source of delight unto the world, even as the charming Queen of Night ; the most expert in training horses and elephants and in chariot races ; master of the Science of the Bow, he was withal ever assiduous in attending upon his parents and ministering to their least comforts.

Lakshmana, blessed with every perfection and excellence, was ever devoted to his brother Rāma, the beloved of men ; the whole current of his thoughts, words and deeds set towards Rāma ; and *that* even from his very infancy. Sleep visited not the eyes of Rāma, the best of men, if Lakshmana were not by ; he relished not his food, be it ever so delicious, if Lakshmana was not there to share it with him. His right hand and his visible life currents he regarded Lakshmana. When Rāma rode out to hunt, Lakshmana ever accompanied him, bow in hand, to shield him from any harm. Satrughna was unto Bharata what Lakshmana was unto Rāma.

Dasaratha, surrounded by his four beloved and fortunate sons, shone even as the Four-faced Brahma among the Regents of the Spheres. His heart waxed glad to see them grow in wisdom, derived from the study of the arts and sciences ; to see them adorned with every perfection ; to mark their keen sense of shame, when, from heedlessness, their thoughts happened to go astray ; to see them proficient in every worldly affair ; to hear of their growing fame among men as prodigies of intellect ; and to observe their wonderful faculty of seeing before them into the future and act accordingly. The sons were not slow to note the love of their sire towards them ; they became more assiduous, if possible, in their studies of the science

of Ethics and sacred legendary lore and in the mastery of the bow, and ever served their sire joyfully.

Now, Dasaratha one day took deep counsel with his High Priest and his kinsmen about the approaching marriage of his boys; when, unto him among his ministers, came all unexpected the great sage Visvāmitra, of high spiritual lustre and said to the Wardens of the Gate, "Let the king know that Visvamittra, the son Gādhi is here to see him." In great fear and trepidation they ran in and informed the king that Visvāmitra waited for an audience; whereat, the king made haste to welcome the sage very carefully and humbly, even as Indra welcomes Brahma. His face shone with gladness at the sight of Visvāmitra of stern austerities, and through Vasishtha he extended unto him all the rites of hospitality. Visvamittra graciously accepted the king's kindness and inquired after his welfare. "Art thou ever intent on gathering rare and valuable objects and increasing the collection? Are thy kin and friends happy and the subjects in thy capital and kingdom? Is thy treasury growing? Are thy subject princes obedient and loyal to thee? Art thou regular in thy sacrifice to the gods and other religious observances? Dost thou duly acquit thyself of thy duties as a man and as a king? Do thy guests receive hospitable entertainment at thy hands? Dost thou make right use of the various methods of kingcraft?" He then proceeded to enquire after the health and welfare of Vasishtha, Vāmadēva and the other sages. Pleased with his attentions to them, they proceeded to the audience chamber and took their usual seats.

Then Dasaratha, the great giver, approached the sage and with his hair standing on end through joy, exclaimed, "Holy One! this kind visit of thine, which I never dared to dream of, gladdens my old heart more than if a mortal came by the Waters of Immortality; more than welcome rains to parched deserts; more than a son born to one in his old age, of his lawful wife; more than

recovered treasure to the loser ; more than the marriages of their children to fond parents. Has thy journey hither been a pleasant one ? What shall I do to gratify thy wishes ? Blessed am I, in that Heaven has sent me one than whom I can desire no fitter recipient. Fair is the day that brought thee here. It is now that my birth has borne fruit and this my long life here. As a royal sage, there was no wish of thine that thou didst not gratify ; then, by dreadful austerities, thou becamest a Brahmarshi and thy heart knows no desire. Every way thou art an object of reverence and honor unto me. Thy visit here has washed away my sins and it is a wonder to me indeed, when I come to think of it. A sight of thy holy face has translated me to the regions of the Blessed. Allow me to perform thy behests and deserve thy grace. Art thou not a god unto me, a household deity ? Thou hast come unto me only for my greatest good and thy visit has increased my religious merit. Hesitate not to acquaint me with the object of thy journey hither ; *be it small or great I give you my royal word to accomplish it unto the least detail.*"

So in all humility and from a full heart, spoke Dasaratha, born of ancestors who reckoned among them such famous men as Trisanku. The words fell sweet upon the ears of the noble sage and his heart was glad thereat.

CHAPTER XIX

VISVÂMITRA SEEKS RÂMA OF DASARATHA

To which, the saintly One, his heart dancing at the words of the great-souled king, replied, " Best of monarchs that thou art it becomes thee well, and no other in this world. It does great credit to the high ancestry to which thou belongest and to the holy sage Vasishtha, who is thy Guru. Promise to carry out what I have in mind ; and when thou hast once promised, see you fail not at any cost to accomplish it to the utmost. At present, I am engaged in a holy rite with a special purpose ; and two Râkshasas, able to assume any shape at will, are bent upon spoiling it. When I am about to close my rite, these two, Mârichâ and Subâhu, powerful and skilful, pour down showers of flesh and blood on the sacrificial altar and pollute it for ever. Thus annoyed and my purpose baffled, I came away weary and almost despairing. I cannot bring myself to direct my anger against them, and inflict a curse, for, the nature of the vow forbids it ; so, I request thee to give me thy eldest son Râma, beautiful, valiant, and of resistless prowess. Protected by me, and by the force his innate energy as well, he is able to destroy these Râkshasas that afflict me. I will see that this enterprise brings him incalculable good and great glory, such as will be held in high esteem in the three worlds. The Râkshasas cannot stand before him even for a moment, and no one but Râma can destroy them. Full of extreme conceit at their valour, these wicked ones are no match for Râma ; lo ! the shadow of death is creeping upon them. Never allow the great love thou hast for thy sons to interfere with this momentous work. I swear to thee that the Râkshasas cannot escape him. I know the real Râma, the great-souled One of invincible might. Vasishtha, of high spiritual eminence, knows it too, and these

holy sages that pass their time in stern austerities. If thou desirest to secure supreme renown in this world and unbounded righteousness in the next, send Râma along with me. If thy ministers give their consent to it, as also Vasishtha and the other saintly ones, send Râma along with me. I want him for ten days and no longer ; for, by that time I will have finished my sacrifice. So, send along with me the handsome Râma, whom I so earnestly pray for. To speak the truth, he has no attachment to anything down here. See to it that the time for the performance of the sacrifice is not past. Arrange accordingly and allow no grief to take possession of thy heart."

Thus spake Visvâmitra, the great sage, *to whom nothing was impossible*. With a heavy heart Dasaratha listened to the request of the sage, which, though it conferred good on his son and was righteous in its nature, unnerved him completely. Pierced to the heart, the strong-minded king was overpowered with grief and tottered upon his throne.

CHAPTER XX

DASARATHA'S REPLY

The words of Vigvāmitra stunned him quite. For a long while he remained like one demented ; then, mastering himself with a mighty effort, in faltering accents he managed to reply. "Rāma, the darling of my heart, Rāma, with eyes lovely as the fresh-blown lotus leaves, is yet in his early teens. I dare not even dream of his being able to stand in battle against the mighty night-rangers. Countless millions of war-worn veterans call me their lord and master, each a host in himself. My warriors are valiant, covered with fame and versed in the use of every kind of weapon, human and divine. I shall put myself at their head and wipe out these Rākshasas. They are more competent to fight these demons, but ask me not Rāma. Here am I, ready to march against them, bow in hand, millions of tried soldiers at my back and fight for thee to my last breath. I promise thee I will myself go over there and see that thou accomplish thy vow safe and without any interruption ; but, I pray thee, ask not Rāma of me. He is yet a child. He has not yet finished his training. He knows not the strength and weakness of himself and of his enemies. He has never been yet in battle and his is not the might derived from the possession of celestial weapons. Knowest thou not that Rāma is entirely unfit to fight against these Rākshasas ? They never fight straight, but always take refuge in their arts of illusion. Take Rāma away from me and thou takest my very life. Nay, if thou art bent upon taking Rāma with thee, take me too and my numerous army, well appointed. This, my son, has gladdened my heart after sixty thousand years of disappointed hopes and fruitless grief. How canst thou have the heart to take away Rāma from me, the light of my eyes and the prop of my old age? Knowest thou not that, of my four

sons, Râma lies next to my heart ? Need I tell thee that he is my first-born and the most steadfast in virtue ? So, take not Râma away from me. These, thy Râkshasas, who are they ? Whose sons are they ? What is their might ? Wherein lies their strength ? Under whose protection are they ? How dost thou want Râma to fight them ? Tell me, for I will do it, how to render useless all their illusions ; for thou hast me and my countless hosts to do thy bidding. Instruct me how I can withstand these Râkshasas, proud of their valour."

Then replied Visvâmitra, " May be, thou hast heard of a Râkshasa, Râvana by name, descended of the hoary Pulastya. The sage Visravas is his father ; he is own brother to Vaisravana, and monarch of all the Râkshasas on earth ; immeasurable is his strength and matchless his might ; gifted with wonderful boons from Brahma and with countless hosts of Râkshasas at his back, he grinds the three worlds beneath his heels. When he does not himself descend to spoil the sacrifices, these, his creatures, Mâricha and Subâhu, take his place and excel him in cruelty and wantonness."

Then said Dasaratha, with a faint heart : " Powerless am I to cope with that wicked one. Have pity on my child of tender years, oh, righteous Lord ! Unfortunate that I am, thou art my Guru and my God. The Devas, the Dânavas, the Gandharvas, the Yakshas, the Nâgas and the Pannagas, cannot bear to look upon Râvana, terrible in battle ; why speak of puny mortals such as we ? Râvana absorbs, as it were, the strength and might of those that face him in battle ; I dare not even dream of opposing him or his hosts, either alone or with my armies or with my sons. But, on no account will I part with my darling Râma, beautiful as a god and a child in years, in experience, and in warfare. Mâricha and Subâhu those sons of Sunda and Upasunda, are mighty and extremely skilled in fight. Born to a Yaksha woman, and best and foremost of the Daityas, they

are terrible in battle, even as the God of Death. They are set upon ruining thy sacrifice and never shall I send my son against them to certain destruction as it were. However, if thou so desirest it, I will call my friends around me and fight with any others but the two."

These words of Dasaratha, the ravings of a sorrow-laden heart, roused to fury the smouldering wrath of the descendant of Kusika; and it blazed forth even as the sacrificial fire glows with steady flame, when huge libations of ghee are poured into it.

CHAPTER XXI

VASISHTHA ADVISES DASARATHA TO SEND RÂMA

But, he kept back his rising anger as well as he might and replied to the incoherent words of love uttered by the fond father. "Thy word once gone forth, thou now seekest to go back upon it. Verily this is unworthy of thy race, glorified by such men as Raghu and contrary to the traditions of thy ancestors. Well, well, if thou thinkest that thou have acted right in this matter I will even go back as I came. *Worthy descendant of Kâkutstha ! reign thou in peace of heart and in happiness, having kept thy plighted faith so well.*"

At these fiery words of the terrible Visvâmîtra, winged with wrath, the solid earth shook to the foundations and the very Gods trembled in dismay. Then, Vasishtha, of mighty vows, intelligent and saintly, knowing that the whole universe stood overpowered with fear at the anger of the sage, addressed himself to Dasaratha. "Born as thou art in the line of Ikshwâku and thyself the incarnation of justice and virtue ; firm in thy vows and of fortitude unspeakable ; endowed with every kind of worldly happiness, thou shouldst not seek now to swerve from the Path of Right trod by thy ancestors of happy memory. Right well hast thou upheld in the world till now the glory of the line of Raghu, as the ideal Monarch, the Great Giver. Shrink not from the duty laid on thee and let not thy heart be drawn away to the Path of Unrighteousness. You have said, 'I will accomplish thy object ; and if thou now seekest to prove unfaithful, thou but destroyest the hard-won merit of every righteous act of thy long life ; so is it that I advise thee to send Râma along with the sage. Endowed with the might of celestial weapons or without them. the Rakshasas are but straw before his

fiery energy, protected as he is by the strong arm of Visvāmitra, even as the ambrosia of the Gods by the blazing fire. Knowest thou the mystery that shrouds him whom it is given thee to call thy son ? He is the Great Law. He is the Supreme One, the head and source of valor, wisdom and spiritual might. Mortal eyes, clouded by ignorance, cannot pierce the veil that hides his glory, nay, not the highest Gods.

“ Visvāmitra here is Dharma embodied ; he is the foremost of mighty warriors. None can cope with him in knowledge and wisdom ; he is the highest example of Tapas and its exponent. He knows best the secret of every kind of magical weapon and none but he,—none, in all the worlds above or below, not even the Gods, the Rishis, the Asuras, Rākshasas, the Gandharvas, the Yakkhas, the Kinnaras and the Uragas. When he sat of old on the throne of his forefathers and held sway over the earth, these, the mighty sons of Bhrīṣṇu, were given unto him, every one of them. These grandsons of the Prajāpati Daksha are countless, brilliant in their lustre, all-consuming and of unspeakable might. Daksha had two charming daughters, Jayā and Suprabhā, who were the mothers of countless weapons, human and divine, of unbearable effulgence. Five hundred did Jayā bring forth for the destruction of the Asura hosts, inconceivably powerful and changing forms at will ; and to Suprabhā were born another five hundred, in no way behind their brothers. Visvāmitra here knows everything worth knowing about them ; nay, such is his insight that he can, without any effort, create new ones, if necessary. Believe me when I tell thee that his vision extends clear into the remotest future. Neither in fame nor in virtue nor in holiness has he his equal. Hence I say unto thee, entertain no doubts about sending Rāma along with him. To destroy these impious wretches is child’s play to the sage ; for the glory of your son and for no other reason does he seek thee out even in thy house and pray thee to give him Rāma.”

The old heart of Dasaratha was filled with joy and his face shone bright at the calm and convincing words of Vasishttha. Gladly he gave his consent to Visvamittra taking along with him, Râma, the son of his heart ; and it was to the undying glory of himself and to the welfare of the worlds.

CHAPTER XXII

RÂMA AND LAKSHMANA GO WITH VISVÂMITRA

Then he called unto him Râma and Lakshmana, his inseparable companion ; and with his face beaming with joy, caused protective rites to be performed on behalf of the brothers, consecrated with holy mantras. Vasishtha, the High-priest, himself conducted them ; and Kausalyâ, with a mother's love, recited powerful and holy mantras over her child's head to guard him from every danger. Thereafter, the king clasped his favourite to his breast, smelt his head, gave him his choicest blessings and with a full heart and cheerful, he made him over unto Visvâmitra ; for, Vasishtha opened his eyes to the real nature of Râma and his grand mission. When the Holy One took leave of the king and started to go, and Râma of God-like presence along with him, a cool and refreshing breeze blew, free of dust. Flowers rained from the heavens ; celestial drums, conches and other martial music were heard on high ; and the gods rejoiced, in that the hour of their deliverance drew nigh.

Visvâmitra led the way. Râma followed behind, with bow on his back, his fair curls blown about his face by the gentle breeze ; and Lakshmana came last, the shadow of Râma. Even as three-hooded serpents or as the Asvins reverently following in the wake of the great Grand-sire, did the brothers of matchless prowess follow the holy Visvâmitra, the beautiful peacock feathers waving over their thick coils of hair. It added, as it were, to the unbearable splendour of the sage to see the brothers Râma and Lakshmana walk after him brightening the bright space around. Lovely of form and radiant in their lustre, they were a charming sight to see, these boys armed with sword and bow, with leatheren gauntlets

braced on their hands ; and it forcibly reminded one of the Fire-born sons Skanda and Visâkha, walking behind Mahâdêva, the Lord of the worlds.

They had passed not more than a mile along the southern banks of Sarayû, when Viśvâmitra turned back and said in sweet accents, “Lose no time, Râma, but purify yourself with water and receive from me the mantras Balâ and Atibalâ. Hunger nor thirst, nor fatigue nor fever, nor weakness of limbs shall come upon you. The night-rangers shall not come near you, awake or asleep, careless or on your guard. None shall stand before you in the worlds above or below. In strength of arm or in valor, in fortune or in skill, in wisdom or in knowledge, in readiness of speech or quickness of reply you will not find your equal. In every respect you will be far and above any one, man or God ; for, these two mantras secure to the possessor every kind of knowledge and are the source of all wisdom. Recite these on your way and you will want for nothing. Unequalled fame too shall be yours, for, these sciences are the sons of Brahma, of unspeakable glory ; and search as I may, I cannot find any one more fitted to receive them than yourself. For, know I not that you are the head and fount of all knowledge, human and divine ? These, the offspring of mighty tapas, and multiformed, shall confer upon you incalculable good.”

So spoke Viśvâmitra ; for, who knew better than he that the boys were never before accustomed to travel on foot in the pathless woods, and put up with the chances of hunger and thirst, heat and cold, fatigue and sleeplessness ?

Râma purified himself accordingly and with a glad heart and bright face received them at the hands of the Holy One. Thereat his energy and splendor were immeasurably enhanced, even as that of the thousand-rayed Lord of the Day in a cloudless autumn sky. The princes

rendered reverence meet to the Holy sage, their Teacher and the three spent the night on the banks of the Sarayū. And the dark hours passed away all too soon, beguiled by the pleasant discourse of the saintly ascetic, as the boy princes lay on their grass beds, all unaccustomed and strange after the princely luxury of the Royal Palace of their father.

CHAPTER XXIII

KÂMÂSRAMA

At daybreak, Visvâmitra came to rouse the princes lying asleep on their couch of grass.

The golden halo of radiance that crowned the face of Râma caught his eye strongly and half to himself, he said, “What is there that I will not give to know how the thrice-fortunate Kausalyâ managed to find favour in the eyes of the Lord of Glory and won the envied privilege of calling the Great Father, her dear son.” Then, aloud to the object of his thoughts “Râma, thou priceless gem that lay enshrined in the holy waters of Kausalyâ’s happy womb! the rosy dawn begins to creep over the slumbering Earth. Yonder Sun chases before him the fleeting Spirit of Darkness; awaken thou to thy glorious task and put to rout the impious Sons of Darkness.

“The shades of night roll back from the face of the globe; and with it the veil of ignorance that erstwhile hid from my eyes the mystery that circles round thee. To me it was given to set my eyes on thy sleeping glory, yet I long to see thee awakening to the light of day. Discharge thou the rites and observances that thou hast laid down for the children of the Earth : for thou art their ideal and example. Awake, for a stern taskmaster must he be to himself, who seeks to lead others along the rough ways of duty.”

Thereat the royal pair sprang from their rude couch, had their bath in the holy river and went through their daily round of duties, nor forgot to recite the rare mantras taught them. Then, they reverently saluted their master, the holiest of sages and, with a glad heart, prepared to follow him.

They travelled a long way and saw before them the holy Gangâ of celestial origin, and further on, where it

mixes its waters with the Sarayū ; and in that holy spot they came upon the dwellings of saintly ascetics of stern austerities, who pursued their life of self-denial and altruism for thousands of years. The princes were possessed with curiosity to hear from Visvāmitra every thing about it and turned to him with "Holy Sir! to whom does this hermitage belong? Who abides in it at present? Great is our desire to know this; and we see no one who could speak upon it with better knowledge."

Lightly laughed the sage at the seeming ignorance of Rāma and at his assumed curiosity. "With great pleasure," said he, "if you will give me your attention for a while."

"In the far past, Mahādēva chose this spot to carry on a course of austerities; he had taken Pārvatī to wife and was once on his way to get her down to attend upon himself during the while. At that time the Lord of Love took human shape and the Wise Ones called him Kāma. In an evil hour he took it into his head to approach the Great God and draw him away from his holy meditations, by rousing in him thoughts of love towards the Daughter of the Mountain-king; and the Maruts secretly urged him on. When, lo! the Lord of Ascetics opened upon him his Third Eye; 'Hum,' cried the Great One and there shot out from his eye a tongue of flame that reduced to a heap of ashes what was once Kāma, the ideal of beauty and grace in the worlds above or below. Thus did the wrath of Siva render the God of Love bodiless; and hence his name thereafter, Ananga, the Bodiless. The spot where he met his sad fate is known as the Angadēsa.

"This is the holy hermitage of Siva and these sages are his disciples, ever devoted to virtue; they know not sin. Rest we here for the night, between these holy rivers which we shall cross to-morrow. Now let us finish the evening rites and proceed to their holy abode."

Meanwhile, those saints of pure lives, saw through their spiritual eye the coming of the holy sage and

his princely disciples and the object of their journey, and came forward to welcome them to their forest home even while the latter were speaking about them. They offered glad rites of hospitality unto Visvāmitra, and extended a hearty welcome to Rāma and Lakshmana. And in their sweet company, the quick hours glided away unperceived, so kind were they and loving and so sweet was their discourse ; till the shades of night grew on them, which perceiving, they proceeded with concentrated minds to offer their evening prayers to the Goddess of Twilight. So, in that hermitage associated with the evil-fated Kāma, did these pass the night in the company of many other ascetics whom their hosts invited there to share their pleasant time ; while Visvāmitra, of boundless wisdom and steadfast virtue, entertained the princes with pleasant narratives of old times and men and beguiled the long hours of the night.

CHAPTER XXIV

TÂTAKÂ'S LAIR

The world awoke to a new day and the valiant princes, rising with the dawn, discharged their morning duties and followed their preceptor to the banks of the mighty river. Meanwhile, their saintly hosts had prepared a beautiful boat to take them across ; and reverentially addressing themselves to Visvâmitra, said to him, “ May it please you to get into this along with your worthy disciples. We have delayed you enough ; now a happy journey to you all the way and every good go with you.” Visvâmitra saluted them and took reluctant leave of the kind-hearted ones and crossed over the sacred stream, he and his pupils. When they were in the middle of the current, Râma and his brother heard a mighty sound proceeding from the confluence of swift-coursing waters and turning to their teacher, requested to know the source of the noise as of clashing ocean-waves. To which, Visvâmitra replied all willingly :

“ On the heights of the far-famed Kailâsa there exists a lake of supreme sanctity, brought into existence by an act of will of the four-faced One ; and hence its name MâNASA Lake. A stream issuing from that holy spot, comes down the heights and falls into the Gangâ, passing by the capital of your father, even Ayôdhyâ ; and hence its name Sarayû. The sound, so wonderful to your young ears, proceeds from the meeting of its holy waters with the rapid current of the divine Gangâ ; and you will do well to offer your reverent salutations unto it.”

The princes obeyed him accordingly ; and crossing over to the farther banks without more loss of time, soon they came upon a frightful forest, devoid of the presence of Brâhmaṇas ; at the sight of which, Râma, curious to

know everything about it, addressed himself to Visvâmitra and said, "Lord! this wood fills me with curiosity; it resounds with the hoarse cries of terrible beasts of prey, rendered all the more fearful by the screams of wild birds and numerous flying insects. Lions, tigers, boars, and elephants, not to speak of numerous winged creatures, lend the aid of their dreadful presence to heighten the horror of the scene. Yet, this forest, so dreadful and uninviting, is pleasant to look at, beautified as it is with countless trees of graceful foliage and lovely blossoms, Dhava, Asvakarna, Kakubha, Bilva, Tinduka, Patala and Badarî and many others of unknown origin and properties."

And Visvâmitra hastened to reply, "Râma dear, listen to me while I narrate to you a story of the far past as to whom this frightful forest belongs. Long years ago, these tracts known as Malada and Karûsa were large kingdoms teeming with countless millions, prosperous, happy and fair, even as the fancy creations of the gods. Once upon a time, it befell that Indra slew the Asura Vritra; the sin took shape and entered into him along with hunger and uncleanness, overpowering his divine form and nature. Then the gods and the sages had him purified with the waters of holy rivers, consecrated with powerful Mantras; and here it was that his foul uncleanness fell away from him. Having consigned to this place the uncleanness and the hunger that afflicted him, the hearts of the gods were glad. And Indra, overjoyed at finding himself free from his troubles, and pure once more, in a transport of gratitude, did he confer a boon on this place. "These two populous provinces have helped to receive the foulness of my body; and they shall be celebrated on earth, as Malada and Karûsa." The Devas applauded his act and his sense of reverence to the place that gave him back his pristine purity. And for long years thereafter, these places were the homes of happy millions, living in plenty, and blessed with everything that man could get from Nature.

Then there came on earth a Yaksha woman, who had the strength of a thousand elephants and could take any form at will. She was the wife of Sunda; and Tātaka (for so was she named) bore him a son, Māricha, who equalled Indra himself in prowess. Huge of bulk and strong of arm, that Rākshasa held the people of these kingdoms in abject terror, by his matchless might and frightful countenance and form; while Tātakā amused herself with destroying the innocent inhabitants hereabouts, by hundreds and by thousands. Yonder has she taken up her abode, about half a yojana from here; and hence people steer clear of these parts as the own preserves of Tātakā. Slay her of your strong arm and rid these fair lands of a great pest; for I command you thereunto. I tell you again, that none dare to enter these regions, through which the dreadful Yakshī ranges free and unhindered. And now you know, as well as I, how these once fair and populous lands have been laid waste, beyond all hope of recovery."

CHAPTER XXV

TÂTAKÂ

To which pregnant words of the sage of no mean might, Râma, the flower of valor, returned sweet answer, “ I have been given to understand that the Yakshas are not very formidable ; how is it that one of them, and that a woman, is gifted with the wonderful strength of a thousand elephants ? ”

“ Know then ” said Visvâmitra “ that this weak and fragile woman is endowed with abnormal strength by virtue of a boon. Long ago there was a Yaksha, Suketu by name, a man of righteous deeds and great prowess. Unblest with any child, he had recourse to Brahma to get one ; long did he pray and earnestly, until the Great Architect of the worlds was pleased with his tapas, and gave him a lovely daughter Tâtakâ, with the strength of a thousand elephants in her ; but no son. And when she came of age to marry, he gave her a dream of beauty and grace as wife to Sunda the son of Jarjha. In good time, Mârîcha was born unto them, who later on was shorn of his great glory by being cursed to become a Râkshasa. When Sunda met his fate at the hands of Agastya, she and her son sprang upon the Holy One with terrible roars, meaning to eat him up ; whereat of the mighty sage blazed forth wrath in and he cursed the pair “ Wretches ! Quit these fair forms and take up those of Râkshasas, terrible to behold and monstrous, and roam the earth feeding on human flesh.”

Maddened with the curse, she takes revenge by laying waste, in her fury, what were once the favorite haunts of Agastya. And, Râma ! I would that in the interests of the cows and the Brahmanas, you slay out of hand, this wicked Yakshini of cruel deeds, this fiend, who uses her

terrible strength to such evil purpose. And the more so, because, except your valiant self, no one in the worlds above or below can bring down this wretch, who glories in the might of her boon. Let no misplaced sense of pity stay your arm from wreaking this long delayed vengeance upon this cruel monster. For, you are of the line of kings and the welfare of defenceless millions demands it at your hands. A king ought to discharge his duties cruel or otherwise, sinful or meritorious, if he would protect those whose destinies lie in his hands. This is the Path of Right trod by the kings of old, whose broad backs bore the heavy responsibility of empire. Slay this unrighteous one, for, no law, human or divine, restrains her actions. Know you not that Indra slew Māñtharā, the daughter of Virōchana, who sought to plunge the whole world in ruin ? Know you not that Vishnū mercilessly destroyed the wife of Bhrigu and mother of Sukra, who calmly set about to wipe out Indra. Instances out of count can I quote to show that kings have always deemed it their duty to rid the earth of such wicked monsters in human form. So, Rāma ! upon your head and eyes be it that thou cleave the heart of this woman, stealing *your* heart against tender emotions.”

CHAPTER XXVI

THE FALL OF TÂTAKÂ

Then, to the soul-stirring words of his preceptor, Râma, steadfast in his principles of conduct, gave meet reply, with joined palms the while : “ My father’s commands and more than that, my respect for thee, impel me to follow without hesitation or doubting the orders given by Visvâmitra. For, have I not been enjoined to that purpose by my sire Dasaratha, in the royal presence and before the holy sages ? And shall I falsify his words ? Never. So, out of respect to my father and out of respect to the Holy One of boundless wisdom whom I have the happiness to call my Guru, I shall verily bring about the destruction of Tâtaka and no doubt of that. Here I am, ready to carry out your orders, that aim at the welfare of cows and Brâhmaṇas and the happiness of these once prosperous lands.”

So saying, he grasped his mighty bow by the middle, strung it in a moment and drew it to his ear; and the sound thereof was terrible to hear, and echoed far and near. Birds and beasts and the numerous creatures that made the dreadful forest their home, trembled in affright. Tâtaka was at first confused ; but, rage unbounded mastered her and she rushed towards the spot whence the sound came. Seeing her advance towards them with open mouth, huge as a mountain, and deformed, Râma turned to Lakshmana and said, “ Lo ! my brother ! Yonder Yakshini is really no pleasant sight to behold. Timid ones will die of terror were they to look at her. But, endowed as she is with unlimited powers of illusion and be she formidable to stand against, my arrows shall compel her to retire as fast as she came, but a nose and ears less. Anyhow, I cannot bring myself to slay her,

for, her womanhood stays my arm ; I shall even content myself with depriving her of her energy and power of motion.”

He had not finished, when Tātaka espied him afar and rushed at him with a howl of rage. Visvāmitra stayed her with the word “Hum” and prayed that the brothers may come out safe and victorious. She raised a huge cloud of dust that shut out the princes from view for a time ; and resorting to her powers of illusion, showered rocks and stones on the pair. Then Rāma’s ire was up ; and scattering the rocks by a flight of arrows, he cut off her hands as she sprang at him. Yet she stayed not but roared frightfully, albeit tired and without her hands when, Lakshmana operated upon her and chopped off her ears and nose. The next moment she assumed a thousand shapes and was here, there and everywhere ; then, all at once she vanished from view, leaving them bewildered by her illusion. Yet, a ceaseless downpour of rocks indicated her activity and made her terrible presence felt, at which, Visvāmitra grew impatient and exclaimed to Rāma with some warmth, “A truce to your misplaced tenderness ; are you not yet convinced that she is a she-devil who has destroyed the sacrifices of many an unoffending sage ? Twilight is drawing apace and then these foul things of darkness are most powerful, nay almost invincible. See, how her energy increases as the day wane and the night draws near. Slay her outright and delay not.”

Strong in her powers of illusion, she remained invisible ; but Rāma’s shafts sought her out even there and stayed her rocky downpour. Then, in sheer despair, did she rush at the princes with terrible roars of baffled rage ; when, the boy-hero shot at her a Fiery Shaft. Fierce as a thunderbolt and almost irresistible, it struck her full on the chest ; down she fell and gave up her bloody life.

At once there arose a glad shout of unspeakable relief from the anxiously watching Indra and his host of cele-

tials. "Bravo! bravo!, well done!" cried they with one voice and lauded Râma to the skies. They then addressed themselves to Visvâmitra and said, "Holy One! all hail to you; you have laid every one of us, under a deep obligation. Give yet another proof of your great love to Râma by imparting unto him the Science of the divine weapons, the sons of the Prajâpatî, Bhrisâsva. Of never-failing might, brought into existence by long and terrible Tapas, you cannot find for them a fitter recipient than Râma, so devoted is he to your service, and so necessary it is towards accomplishing a great end we have in view. So delay no more." They ended; and with loving salutations to the Holy One and hearty blessings on the boy-heroes, departed to their respective abodes.

Meanwhile, the shades of night were falling fast; and Visvâmitra, well pleased with Râma, smelt him lovingly on the head and said, "Rest we here for the night and reach my hermitage to-morrow." So they passed the night in the once-dreaded haunts of Tâtakâ, but now freed from its unhappy curse and once again a smiling and happy land, beautiful even as Chaitraratha. Râma, having thus rid the earth of the terrible daughter of a Yaksha, gods and sages vied with one another in singing his praises; a deep sleep and sweet descended upon the tired eyes of Râma and he lay locked in the soft arms of slumber, till he was roused at early dawn by the holy sage.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE GIFT OF VIŚVĀMITRA

Next morning, Viśvāmitra, of mighty renown, turned to the young hero with a pleasant smile and addressed him in accents sweet and mild, " Well pleased am I with you; and out of the joy that fills my heart, shall I impart unto you the mysteries connected with warlike weapons of every kind ; master of which, neither Gods nor Asuras, Gandharvas nor Uragas, can stand against you in battle and not come under your influence and be worsted. Such mighty weapons shall I give you, divine in their essence.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. <u>Dandachakra</u> | 30. <u>Nandana</u> , the favorite |
| 2. <u>Dharmachakra</u> | Astra of the <u>Vidyâdhara</u> s (sword-like in |
| 3. <u>Kâlachakra</u> | shape) |
| 4. <u>Vishnuchakra</u> | 31. <u>Mânava</u> } (the favorite |
| 5. <u>Aindrâstra</u> | 32. <u>Prasvâpana</u> } Astras of the |
| 6. <u>Vajrâstra</u> | 33. <u>Prasamana</u> } <u>Gandharvas</u>). |
| 7. <u>Sîvâ's Trident</u> | |
| 8. <u>Brahmasiras</u> | 34. <u>Sûryâstra</u> |
| 9. <u>Aishikâstra</u> | 35. <u>Darpana</u> |
| 10. <u>Brahmâstra</u> | 36. <u>Sôshana</u> } favorites of |
| 11. The clubs, <u>Môdakî</u> and
<u>Sikhari</u> | 37. <u>Santâpana</u> } the God of |
| 12. <u>Dharmapâsa</u> | 38. <u>Vilâpana</u> } Love. |
| 13. <u>Kâlapâsa</u> | 39. <u>Madana</u> |
| 14. <u>Varunapâsa</u> | 40. <u>Mohanâstra</u> (used by the |
| 15. <u>Varunâstra</u> | <u>Pisâchas</u>) |
| 16. Two thunderbolts, the
moist and the dry. | 41. <u>Tâmasâstra</u> |
| 17. <u>Pinâkâstra</u> | 42. <u>Saumanâstra</u> |
| 18. <u>Nârâyânâstra</u> | 43. <u>Samvartâ</u> |
| 19. <u>Agneyâstra</u> (named
<u>Sikhara</u>) | 44. <u>Mausalâstra</u> |
| | 45. <u>Satyâstra</u> |

- | | | | |
|------------------|----------------------------|--|--|
| 20. Vâyavyâstra | (named
Prâthana) | 46. Mâyâdhara | |
| 21. Hayasîras | | 47. Têjas Prabhâ | |
| 22. Kraunchâstra | | 48. Sisirâstra (used by the God
Sôma) | |
| 23. Vishnusakti | | 49. Sudâmana | |
| 24. Rudrasakti | | 50. Sîtêshu (the weapon of
Bhaga) | |
| 25. Kankâla | } used by
the
Asuras | 51. Mânavâstra | |
| 26. Musala | | | |
| 27. Ghôra | | | |
| 28. Kâpâla | | | |
| 29. Kankana | . | | |

All these and many more do thou receive from me. They are of no ordinary might ; they can take any form at will and can be depended upon in any emergency."

Then Visvâmitra duly purified himself and taking his seat facing the East, initiated Râma into the mysteries of those magical weapons ; and well pleased was he thereat. So mighty were they that the very Gods could not receive and retain them in their entirety.

As the sage uttered the words of power, they assumed visible form and stood about Râma. With joined palms they addressed their new master and said, " Here we are, Lord Râma, thy servants to command. Ever gracious unto thee, we stand ready to anticipate thy least wishes."

Râma accepted their service and touching each one of them in token of mastership, replied to them with a pleased heart, " Come unto me when I think of you." He next turned to his Guru and offered him reverent salutations ; after which they resumed their journey.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE MYSTERY OF THE WITHDRAWAL

They walked for a while in silence, when Rāma turned to Visvāmitra and said with a bow, “ You have been pleased to initiate me into the mysteries of these magical weapons and have rendered me almost invulnerable to Gods and Asuras. But, may I request to know how these are withdrawn ? ”

And all too glad, did the sage of mighty vows and terrible energy instruct him therein.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| “1. <u>Satyavān</u> | 23. <u>Vimala</u> |
| 2. <u>Satyakīrti</u> | 24. <u>Yogandhara</u> |
| 3. <u>Dhrishtha</u> | 25. <u>Haridra</u> (to destroy the
<u>Daityas</u>) |
| 4. <u>Rabhasa</u> | 26. <u>Sārchiprāna</u> |
| 5. <u>Praṭīhāratāra</u> | 27. <u>Dhritirmālī</u> |
| 6. <u>Parāngmukha</u> | 28. <u>Vrittimān</u> |
| 7. <u>Avāngmukha</u> | 29. <u>Ruchira</u> |
| 8. <u>Lakshāksha</u> | 30. <u>Pitrīsaumana</u> |
| 9. <u>Vishama</u> | 31. <u>Vidhūta</u> |
| 10. <u>Dridhanābha</u> | 32. <u>Makara</u> |
| 11. <u>Sunābhaka</u> | 33. <u>Karavīrakara</u> |
| 12. <u>Dasāksha</u> | 34. <u>Dhana</u> |
| 13. <u>Satāvaktra</u> | 35. <u>Dhānya</u> |
| 14. <u>Dasasirsha</u> | 36. <u>Kāmarūpa</u> |
| 15. <u>Satodara</u> | 37. <u>Kāmaruchi</u> |
| 16. <u>Padmanābha</u> | 38. <u>Moha</u> |
| 17. <u>Mahānābha</u> | 39. <u>Āvaraṇa</u> |
| 18. <u>Dundunābha</u> | 40. <u>Jrimbhaka</u> |
| 19. <u>Sunābhaka</u> | 41. <u>Sarvanābha</u> |
| 20. <u>Jyotiṣha</u> | 42. <u>Santāna</u> |
| 21. <u>Krisāna</u> | 43. <u>Varāna</u> |
| 22. <u>Nairāsyā</u> | |

Receive from me these sons of Bhrisāswa, capable of taking any shapes at will and of unbearable splendor. For, no better recipient do I see than thee.”

"As my Lord willeth" replied Râma with a glad heart and did so. With joined palms they ranged themselves around Râma in human shapes of exceeding effulgence, and there was nothing that he could not command whom they owned as their master. Some were like glowing coals, some like smoke and others radiant like the sun and the moon. All of them reverently saluted their new master and said, "Here are we, thou flower of valor! awaiting thy orders." "Dwell ye in my memory" replied Râma, "and assist me when the time comes. I give you leave to go." "We obey" replied they and taking respectful leave of him, vanished from view. With the permission of his Guru, he instructed Lakshmana in the mysteries of the magical weapons and their withdrawal.

They then resumed their journey until they came to a beautiful grove of trees, at the sight of which, Râma turned to his master and said in charming accents, "What may be that tall grove yonder, hard by that mountain before us? It looks more like a bank of clouds piled up, so lofty it is and so dark. A pleasant sight to see the happy birds and beasts sporting there fearlessly with joyful cries. The lovely aspect of the country hereabouts impels me to think that we are well out of the dark and dreary forest of the she-demon, Tâtakâ. Who is it that resides in that charming locality? Verily, great is my desire to know everything about it. Are we come to where range those wicked wretches of fierce deeds, who revel in slaying Brâhmaṇas and destroying the sacrifices of innocent sages? Where do you conduct your sacrifice? Where should I take my stand to destroy the Râkshasas and protect your rite? Prithee satisfy my unbounded curiosity on this head—you from whom time and space have no secrets!"

CHAPTER XXIX

VÂMANA AND BALI

And to him who desired to acquaint himself with the story of that grove, as if he were no wiser than any one of us, replied Visvâmitra of boundless spiritual might, "Here it was that Vishnu, the Lord of the Universe abode invisible for ages untold, engaged in long and difficult Tapas, for the good of the worlds; and as Vâmana, He sanctified it with His Divine Presence. Siddhâsrama is it called; for, even here the Blessed One accomplished the object of His Tapas.

"It was about that time, Bali, the son of Virôchana, routed the celestial hosts and held undisputed sway over the three worlds. He commenced a grand sacrificial rite, when, Agni and the other Gods came to Vishnu here and said, "Bali, the son of Virôchana, is even now performing a grand sacrifice; and before it is over, you should see that we accomplished our object. He makes it a point to refuse nothing to any one who may ask him for it, it matters not who or what. For our sake call in thy inscrutable Power of Illusion to thy aid; assume the form of a dwarf, seek the sovereignty of the three worlds at his hands as a gift, and bring peace and happiness to the tortured hearts of us all."

It chanced that about the same time, Kâsyapa, the Patriarch, and his wife Aditi carried on a long and severe course of austerities and won the grace of the Lord. Even as the noon-day sun or like the blazing fire shone he in his spiritual glory. Vishnu came down to where he was and spoke to him in sweet and kindly accents, "Son, mightily pleased am I with your Tapas. Ask of me what thou wilt and it is yours."

With noble hymns did Kâsyapa praise the Giver of all good, "Supreme One! My long and difficult vow has

indeed borne fruit in that I have been blessed with a sight of Thy Blessed Presence. Thou art Tapas in Thy essence ; Thou art the embodiment of Tapas ; Thou art the sum total of all Tapas ; and Thou art the innermost soul of every kind of Tapas. The whole universe do I see in Thy resplendent form. Thou hast no beginning and Thy nature is beyond the ken of any, man or god. Lord ! I take my refuge in Thee and Thy boundless mercy."

And to him replied the Lord, " Again do I say unto you that you have won my grace. You are pure as Purity itself and I can refuse you nothing."

Then the son of Marichi submitted unto him a prayer in all humility, " Great One ! grant Thou this boon unto Adîti and unto the gods who pray it of Thee. Deign Thou to be born as our son and let the world know Thee as the younger brother of Indra, whom Thou hast placed over the gods. Render Thou a signal service thereby to the distressed Dêvas. And this holy spot shall, through Thy grace, deserve the name of Siddhâsrama, for, Thou goest forth from this spot when Thy object has been accomplished."

" Be it so," rejoined the Lord and was born of Adîti as Vâmana. Intent upon the good of the worlds, did He approach Bali as a dwarf and say, " Great Giver ! grant me this prayer of mine, *three short feet of earth* ;" and He got it. Thrice did He put forth His mighty foot and the three worlds were covered with it. Bali was shorn of his overwhelming pride and might and Vâmana gave back the sovereignty of the worlds to Indra.

This hermitage is ever associated with the presence of the Lord and ever my heart turns to it with unbounded devotion to Him. Here do the Râkshasas resort, the untiring enemies of the peaceful sages and their sacrifices ; and here it is you should lay them low, the evil ones. This day shall we reach it, the holy Siddhâsrama and it is yours as much as it is mine."

Very soon they were within its sacred precincts and then it was that Visvāmitra shone in all his glory, even as the cloudless moon resplendent in the constellation of Purnarvasu. There he was welcomed by the numerous ascetics of saintly life that made Siddhāsrama their home; right reverently did they accord unto him due worship and no less hearty was the welcome they extended to the princely pair. The brothers rested themselves for a while and approaching their master, said, "Lord! if thou so wilt, thou mayest take upon thyself the sacrificial vow even to-day. Rightly has this place been named Siddhāsrama, for, thy object shall, of a truth, be realized here." "May your words prove true," replied Visvāmitra; and with restrained senses and concentrated mind, did he take upon himself the initiatory vows. In that peaceful hermitage the princes passed the night in the sweet company of the holy sages. At the dawn of day they were up and offering their prayers to the Goddess of Twilight. Their religious observances for the morning over and the mystical recitations of the Mantras, they touched the feet of their Teacher, who, having finished the offerings unto the Fire-god, was seated in calm repose.

CHAPTER XXX

VISVÂMITRA'S SACRIFICE

The valiant princes were no mean judges of time and place : they knew when to speak and where ; and in words respectful and apt, did they address Visvâmitra : “Lord ! kindly acquaint us with the precise time when we should be on our guard against the wicked Râkshasas ; for, we do not wish to be taken unawares and be late.”

The assembled sages there were loud in their praises of the heroic brothers and the martial ardour that characterised their words and actions. “Six days and nights from this, do ye keep strict watch against the cruel ones. The Holy One has taken the sacrificial vow and will observe silence.” And for six days and nights did the youths of boundless energy keep watch and ward over the hermitage. They put their heroic souls into the arduous task and were wholly absorbed in it ; and Visvâmitra, safe under their protection, went on with his sacrificial rite uninterrupted.

On the sixth day, Râma turned to his brother and said “Lakshmana, be on the alert and keep a sharp look out.” And even as he spake and prepared himself for action, did the sacrificial altar begin to glow all on a sudden. Lovely flowers were scattered over it and the utensils of sacrifice—spoons, ladles, pots, pans, fuel-sticks and the sacred grass. Visvâmitra was conducting the rite, grim and silent, while the Adhvaryus and the priests assisted him therein. And to the deep intonation of the holy Mantras to drive away the black demons, did the sacrifice proceed according to the rules laid down for it. All at once the fire leaped up; and close upon it was heard a frightful roar proceeding from the sky. The dreadful Râkshasas were upon them, shrouded in thick murky

clouds that darkened the earth, even as during the heavy rains—the effects of their powers of illusion. Mâricha and Subâhu and their followers ranged themselves in the sky and kept up a continual shower of blood on the fire-altar. The fire blazed up again, higher than before, as if in angry protest against this foul desecration ; and answering fires flashed forth from the eyes of Râma as if reflecting the blood-stained altar. He rushed to the spot and looking upwards, saw the foul demons ranged aloft in terrible array, darkening the darkened sky. All at once did the two foremost, Mâricha and Subâhu, swoop down upon him, even as unclean birds of prey ; when, Râma turned to his brother and said “Lakshmana, lo ! there they come, the wicked wretches, the destroyers of numberless holy rites. Unsightly cannibals these, the dread foes of the celestials, yet tough and unassailable even as thunderbolts. I cannot somehow bring myself to slay such like chaff, small game for me ; yet shall I drive them away, even as fleet-footed clouds before a gale.”

With that, he sent forth a Mânavastra, flaming and terrible in its energy and it that struck Mâricha full on the chest. Back he flew with resistless speed, hundred yôjanas and more, until he fell senseless and tottering into the depths of the tossing ocean.

Amused at the sight, Râma turned to Lakshmana “Wonderful indeed is the Cold Arrow, the mighty Mânavastra and just in its punishment. See, it has struck him senseless, but keeps yet the spark of life in him, as if it divined my secret resolve to spare him against a future occasion, when I have use for him. And as for these, his friends and followers, I shall even destroy the wretched crew, merciless, of foul lives, delighting in deep draughts of human blood, the foes to every holy rite and sacrifice.”

So saying, and as if to display his quickness of hand, he let fly an Agnêyâstra at Subâhu, which struck him square on his heart and hurled him down, a shapeless corpse. And ere the eye had time to wink, he let fly a

Vâyavyastra that despatched the rest to "where the wicked cease from troubling," to the immense delight of the sages, who were anxiously watching this strange fight, between a delicate slip of a boy and the fierce-visaged Râkshasas of vast bulk and might. They could scarcely bring themselves to believe what they saw—it was over so soon ; but, when they realized the wonderful truth, they broke forth in unstinted applause and hearty blessings and eyed Râma with strange awe and reverence, even as the Gods regarded Indra when he came back victor from his terrible battle with the Asuras.

The sacrifice neared its happy end ; the earth and the sky were clear and happy once again, when Visvâmitra turned to Râma and said, " Now my heart knows peace, in that my object has been accomplished. Well hast thou discharged the bidding that thy Guru laid on thee. And rightly has this hermitage been named Siddhâsrama ; you have but confirmed the fact and conferred greater glory on it."

Thanking thus the boy-hero in words sweet and noble, the sage proceeded to his evening prayers, accompanied by the gratified princes.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE TRIP TO METHELÂ

There they stayed for the night, the heroic youths and it was a happy night to them ; in that they had succeeded in their mission. Next morning they were up at day-break and having finished their daily observances, went over to where Visvâmitra and the other ascetics sat. Reverently they saluted their Guru, who blazed forth in his splendour even as the smokeless flaine and said to him in sweet accents and noble “ Here we are, thy servants to command ; what are our orders for the day ? Nay, far be it from your noble heart the thought that you are working us too much, royal youths, delicately nurtured and daintily brought up. There was a king whom gaunt Famine drove to sell his only son to a low-born hind ; would the boor work the boy less for being a prince ? We are yours, body and soul ; for, our sire has made us over to you ; and here is our place at your feet, until you have no more use for us.” *Even so does the Lord seek out His children and render them sweet service and lowly.*

Visvâmitra replied for the other sages and said, “ Jana-ka, the righteous ruler of Mithilâ, is even now celebrating a grand sacrifice ; and if it is not inconveniencing you greatly, we very much like you to come with us. Besides, there is for you a sight to see—a gem of a bow, wonderful, of inconceivable strength, blazing in its energy. It was given by the Gods to a former ruler of the land during a great sacrifice. Neither the Gods nor the Gandharvas, nor the Asuras nor the Râkshasas, can so much as string it ; why speak of puny mortals ? Nay, not that there were wanting countless princes of mighty arm who essayed that impossible feat desiring to gauge the power of the weapon. So, there are two things to attract you

thither—the holy sacrifice and the wonderful bow. It was, as I told you, got by a king of old, as the reward of a great sacrifice he performed in honor of the Gods ; who, pleased therewith, gave him the excellent weapon. It forms the chief object of adoration in Janaka's palace and he offers reverent worship to it every day with bright flowers and sweet perfumes and incense."

He ended and prepared to set out along with the expectant princes and the holy ascetics. Taking affectionate leave of the Wood-Gods that had sheltered him so long in their midst he said, " May all good be yours. Long have I sojourned under your kind shades and to-day I take reluctant leave of you, the object of my stay among you joyfully accomplished. I go forth hence to the Himâlayan heights, over across the Gangâ." Reverently he went round the hospitable abode and set his face towards the north.

And him followed a hundred conveyances of Brahmarshadins ; and wonderful to behold ! the birds and the beasts that dwelt about the holy hermitage went after the mighty sage of righteous vows, until he pressed them to return.

They travelled a long distance, until the sun hung low in the heavens, when the company encamped on the banks of Sonâ. They took their evening bath in the sacred stream and having made offerings unto the Fire-God, sat down before Visvâmîtra ; the princes approached the group and with low reverence to the elders, took their seats in front of their Guru. Râma it was, that started the conversation by a question to Visvâmîtra. " May I pray you to satisfy my great curiosity about this region where we are ? Thickly wooded and well-watered, to whom does it belong ?" And the sage, who loved nothing more than to converse upon things good and holy, spoke as follows, induced thereto by Râma, while the sages of stern austerities drank in the tale with eager ears.

CHAPTER XXXII

KUSANÂBHA

There was once a righteous king, Kusa by name, one of the mind-born sons of Brahma—the wisest and the most valiant. Unlike Nârada and the Kumâras he chose the Path of Action ; and leaving his bright home on high, he took upon himself the onerous duties of a Ruler of men ; hence his name Kusa. Ever respectful unto the good, he was ever intent upon the discharge of the duties of his high office and acquired immense spiritual merit by his hard austerities.

He took unto wife a princess of Vidarbha, who was, in every way, a meet wife for such a holy king ; and she bore unto him four sons, all like unto their sire in character and might—Kusâmba, Kusânâbha, Adhûrtarajas, and Vasu. The old king was extremely pleased with his worthy sons of truthful speech, righteous lives, bright presence and boundless energy ; and following the traditions of the kings of old, he spoke to them, “Reign ye over the earth and acquire inestimable merit thereby.”

And, in obedience to their father’s commands, did the four princes found four excellent capitals—Kausâmbî, Mahôdaya, Dharmâranya and Girivraja, respectively. These are the dominions of Vasu, the last of the brothers. See you yon hills, five in number, that guard the country like giant sentinels ? And there is the lovely stream, Sôna, of great sanctity, that runs like a silver garland among the hills and waters the land of Magadha ruled by Vasu. It is a lovely spot, fertile, well-watered and healthy, the site of ancient kingdoms now no more.

Kusânâbha, the royal sage, had by the Apsaras, Ghritachi, a hundred graceful daughters. One day, these girls, young and lovely, took it into their heads to enjoy a walk in the royal gardens about the city. They were a

charming sight to see, these young and lovely maidens, in their gems and gemmed robes, even as clear pools of crystal waters in the rains. They had a happy time of it among the arbours and bowers, dancing and singing and leaping and frisking.

And it so chanced that Vâyu, the Lord of Air, beheld them in the gardens, in all their ravishing loveliness, in the pride of their youth and charms. Like bright stars between murky clouds shone they ; and Vâyu was stirred even unto the utmost depths of his fickle heart. " My heart goes out unto you, every one, ye lovely ones ! Be mine and crown my days with sweet happiness. Cast off aside that mortal nature of yours and enjoy immortal life in my company. A pitiable sight that youth of mortals even as a streak of lightning in a dark sky ; a blinding flash and lo ! it is gone. But I shall endow you with the deathless youth and beauty of the Immortals themselves."

Long laughed they and loud at these presumptuous words of the Wind-God, whose might none can resist and live. " Thou coursest ever in the bodies of beings, high and low; and no one is unacquainted with what you are and what you can do. Verily it becomes you not to insult us thus with your proposal. Know you not that we are the daughters of Kusânâbha and that it is but child's play to us to hurl yon Indra from his seat of power ? But we waste not our energy on trifles. May that time never come about, when, out of a perverted heart, we will presume to insult our parent of truthful speech and ourselves choose our husbands. Our sire is our master and our God ; and *they* are our lords whom *he* gives us to."

Enraged at the bold and defiant words of the girls, Vâyu's heart was shaken with wrath ; and putting forth his might, did he distort their graceful limbs out of all recognition.

In great grief and shame, they rushed into their father's presence and fell at his feet with sobs and tears. The sight of his dear daughters, once so lovely and happy, but

now so crooked and deformed, and out of their wits with shame and grief, stirred his placid nature to its very depths, and he exclaimed “ What is this, my dears ! Who has dared to insult the Great Law of Right thus flagrantly ? Who has made you crooked and distorted ? What ! all silent ! and weeping ! ”

In fierce rage he hissed forth his questions, like a hooded snake about to strike ; but, mastering himself with a mighty effort, he sent forth his clear spiritual eye before which nothing was hidden.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Brahmadatta.

Thereupon the hundred daughters of Kusanabha laid their heads at his feet and spake "Vayu, Pervader of all, would even compel us to his wishes ; and forgetful of all sense of right and duty, had he recourse to evil ways. ' We are under our reverend sire' we pleaded ' and are not our own masters. Ask thou our sire, if he would give us to thee as wives.' He would not listen to us ; but with a heart bent on evil, made us what you see, even while we were earnestly pleading with him."

Then the King, a rare model of patience and virtue, replied to his afflicted daughters in accents mild and grave. " Well have you done and gloriously. Forgiveness should characterise the life of every one laying any claims to self-restraint and serenity ; and you have borne patiently a deadly insult. I cannot enough praise your harmony of spirit and action, in that you have all acted alike and kept before your eyes the traditions of our race ; for, forgiveness is the brightest jewel in the crown of a woman ; nay, for the matter of that, man as well. Hard task for a girl to brave a man's wiles and seductions : harder to have a giant's strength and not use it like a giant, in the face of deadly insult ; harder still not to burn one's wings at the baleful fires of celestial beauty ; harder still to keep back our thunderbolts when we have the right to launch them against the mighty gods and the chance ; and lo ! hardest of all, wonder of wonders !! the wayward hearts of a hundred maidens, (whose name is frailty) beating all one stroke and acting in perfect unison. Endowed with Forgiveness, a man need not go seek for any other virtue—Charity, Truth, Sacrifice, Fame, or Righteousness ; for, Forgiveness rules the world and holds it up."

Mightier than the very Gods, yet he sent them away, and consulted with his wise ministers as to the marriage of his daughters, the time, the place, and the parties.

It was about that time, a great sage, Chuli by name, practised the Brahma Tapas, with pure life and chaste vows ; and all along, a Gandharva, Somada by name, the daughter of Urmila, attended upon him devotedly, with restrained senses and righteous heart. Gratified with her service, the Holy One saw into the record of Time and speke. " Fair Lady ! well hast thou served me and won my favour. Is there anything I can do for thee ? "

She marked that he was in a mood to give ; and in sweet words and apt, did she pray the Blessed One, who was no mean speaker himself. " Lord ! I make no difference between thee and the supreme Brahman, so great thy Tapas and so mighty the Brahmic splendour that crowns thee. I would even have a son, endowed with Brahma Tapas. No husband do I take, nor does any claim me as his wife. Give me a son, in that I approach thee according to the Brahma mode of marriage."

Pleased with her purity of heart and nobility of purpose, Chuli gave her a mind-born son, named Brahmadatta. Kampilya made he his capital and held sway there as splendidly as Indra over his heavenly realm.

And Kusanabha made up his mind to bestow his hundred daughters on Brahmadatta. Respectfully did he invite him to his city and pray him to accept his girls in marriage. And lo ! the moment Brahmadatta took them by the hand, their deformity and grief dropped away from them like a dark cloak and they shone, if possible, with greater loveliness and grace than ever ; whereat the father's heart knew no bounds to its joy to see them freed from the evil spell cast upon them by Vayu. Later on, he sent them

away with their husband to his capital, with splendour becoming their rank and his sense of joy.

Somada, the fond-mother, rejoiced most at the glorious choice her son did make. She could not fondle her daughters-in-law enough nor praise their noble father.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Visvamitra's Ancestry.

His daughters gone away from him, the childless father set about to perform a rite to get a son to continue his line on Earth. When he was busy about it, Kusa, his father and the mind-born son of Brahma, came down unto him and said, "Son! verily you shall be blessed with a boy, a righteous one after your own heart. Gadhi, you shall call him ; and he shall hold up your name to unparalleled renown in the worlds for all time to come." He spoke and went back to the high world of Brahma, even as he came.

And in good time did Kusanabha see a son born unto him and Gadhi was his name—a marvel of virtue and holiness. Him am I proud to call my sire, Gadhi the saint ; I am a Kausika and a descendant of the godlike Kusa. I have a sister too, Satyavati, born before me, who is given in marriage to Richika ; ever devoted to her husband, she followed him to Swarga in her mortal body. But soon she came down on Earth, as the holy stream Kausiki ; heavenly in her origin, charming and crystal-like in her purity, my sister has devoted herself to the good of humanity. And out of the great love I bear to my dear one, do I like to abide at her side, on the slopes of the Himalaya, whence she flows. Ever steadfast in truth and righteous, my sister Satyavati,

the paragon of wives, stays in her mountain home ; while I, in pursuance of the vow I have bound myself by, have come down here, even to Siddhasrama, far far from my beloved sister ; and deep is the debt of obligation I am under to your godlike valor, in that you have enabled me to accomplish my desires.

Well, it is now past midnight; and I have been keeping you all from sweet sleep, by my accounts of my own ancestry and of the country where we are now, as you desired to know of me. And now, seek ye the arms of repose ; else will our journey to-morrow be delayed. Not a breath of air stirs the leaf of yon trees ; beasts and birds have sought, ere long, their silent abodes ; and Night has spread her black pall over the earth and every part thereof. The shades of twilight are gradually fading away ; and dark Night keeps watch over the sleeping earth and flashes forth bright glances from many a starry eye and constellation. And yonder comes the Queen of Night, the silvery Moon, chasing the darkness from off the Earth with her cool and clear rays and infusing joy and gladness into the hearts of all beings. Behold the Rangers of the night, beings that love the shades of darkness, hosts of Yakshas, Rakshasas, and terrible monsters that batten on human flesh.”

He ended ; the auditors shook of the spell that lay deep upon them and with one voice cried, “ Well, hast thou spoken, Holy One” and rendered him thanks meet and unstinted praise. “ Noble is the race of the Kausikas and ever intent upon Right and Virtue ; and the kings that adorn that line, mighty souls, even as the Great Father Himself. And not the least, your Holy Self, that has acquired everlasting renown ; nor is your sister Kausiki a whit behind these, the best of streams and the bright gem in the crown royal race of Kusa.”

And to the sound of their sweet praise, did Visvamitra sink into the lap of sleep, even as the resplendent Orb of Day retires to rest behind the Evening Hill. The Royal brothers were no less warm in their heart-felt praises of their master and with minds filled with awe and wonder, sought their rude couches and courted calm repose.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Ganga and Uma.

Visvamitra and the sages with him rested there for the night on the banks of Sona. At day-break, he roused the sleeping princes and said "The day dawns and the morning twilight comes on apace. Quit thy slumbers, dear Rama, and prepare to start."

They went through the morning prayers and were about to set out, when Rama addressed himself to the sage and said "Master, this Sona runs shallow, her clear crystal water dotted with small sandy hillocks. Which way shall we cross it?"

To which the sage replied, "Our friends even now are taking the route I advised them to." They crossed to the further bank and proceeded on their journey, feasting their eyes on the beautiful scenery of hill and dale, forest and stream, mountain and valley. At noon, they broke their journey (for they had covered a long way since morning) on the banks of the sacred Ganga, the delightful resort of saintly ascetics. The sight filled the brothers and the sages with supreme joy, the broad waters forming the home of many a swan and other gay aquatic bird sporting fearlessly. There they pitched their quarters and having bathed in the holy river, they offered libations

of water to the manes of the departed. Then devout worship to the sacred Fire and a hearty meal of the sweet food offered thereunto. Once again they met and sat round Visvamitra, of wondrous wisdom, when, Rama took upon himself to draw out the sage and started the conversation.

"Master mine, great is my desire to know how the Ganga, abiding in the high heavens, came down to the dark Earth and flowing through the three worlds entered the Lord of Waters."

Questioned thus, Visvamitra proceeded to recount the origin and the history of Ganga. "Himavan—the monarch of mountains and the storehouse of everything rich and valuable—had by his wife Manorama, the graceful daughter of Meru, two daughters of charming beauty. Ganga was the elder and Uma the younger. The Devas prayed Himavan to grant them the presence of Ganga to accomplish certain ends of theirs. With a philanthropic heart, did he allow them to take her away, the holy river whose water purifies everything it touches. Glad beyond all description at the ready affability of the father, the Devas invited her to their world, ever intent upon doing good to all beings. But Uma the younger, steadfast in virtue and purity, entered upon a long and difficult course of Tapas; at the end of which, her parent gave her as wife to Rudra, a meet bride-groom for the world-honored maiden of mighty spiritual energy. And now, Rama, have I related unto you, as well as I can, the origin of Ganga and Uma, the daughters of Himavan and the honored objects of the World's worship; as also how Ganga of Three Courses went to the region of the Shining Ones. The holy stream before you is none other than she, who from her mountain home in the Himalaya, carried her sin-cleansing waters to the high heavens of the Immortals.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Uma's Curse.

The brothers listened to the recital with pleasure and respect and when the Master had ended, Rama questioned him again. "Wonderful indeed is what you have related and holy ; and now deign to enlighten us on the history of the elder daughter of the Monarch of Mountains. Tell us in detail, for thou knowest best, her birth in Heaven and Earth. How did she come to take three different courses and purify the three worlds ? Narrate her adventures therein and how she came to bear her name Tripathaga."

Thus addressed, the sage of immeasurable spiritual lustre, descended at length on the wonderful narrative to the assembled ascetics. "Of yore, Mahadeva, the Black-throated, of boundless energy, took Uma unto wife; and overpowered with desire, began to disport himself with her. Hundreds of years passed away and Mahadeva knew it not. But there was no issue born of them ; whereat, Brahma and the Devas began to tremble for the consequences. If a son should chance to be born unto these, who could bear him ? So they approached the Divine One and prayed unto him in trembling accents, " Supreme Lord ! Thou art ever intent upon the welfare of the worlds. Turn a merciful ear to the prayers of Thy children, the Angels of Light. The worlds are unable to bear the fiery energy of Thine. Engage Thyself with the Great Mother in Brahma Tapas. Have pity on the worlds ; restrain Thy energy in Thy own body. Protect Thou all beings ; it behoves Thee not to annihilate them."

" Be it so" replied Mahadeva. "I and Uma shall retain our respective energies within our own bodies. Let the worlds rest in peace and your hearts too. But, my energy

has moved out of its receptacle and must break out ; whom then have you among yourselves to receive it?"

" The earth, O Lord, will take unto her Thy energy that might happen to escape Thee."

Then Mahadeva let out his energy on the earth and enveloped her entirely with her mountains and forests. Thereafter, the Gods spoke to Agni " Enter thou the energy of Siva, terrible to approach and let Vayu assist thee therein."

Permeated by Agni, it was transformed into a white mountain and in course of time, a clump of holy reeds sprang thereupon, brilliant as the Sun or the Fire. And from it was born Kartikeya, of great energy, the son of Agni.

Threat Gods and sages praised high Siva and Uma, their hearts filled with joy at the great danger being averted. But Uma, the daughter of the mountain-king, spoke bitter words and sharp to the assembled Gods. "Reap ye the fruit of your crooked ways. Ye have caused me grief and disappointment ; and for your pains take this my curse upon you." Forthwith she took up water and, her whole frame glowing with rage and her eyes red with the fire of wrath, launched a terrible doom at the trembling Gods. "Ye that have dared to interfere with my pleasures, ye that have dared to come between me and the dearest object of my desires—son to gladden my heart, ye shall never have sons born unto ye of your own wives. From this moment, your wives shall be childless."

Next she returned to the affrighted Earth and her anger shot out against her. "Vile creature, many shall be thy forms and many thy lords. Evil-minded One, thou envied me a son and succeeded in depriving me of one ; but my wrath has power to deny thy heart any comfort arising from a child born unto thy loins."

Rudra glanced an eye of pity at the Devas, who, like guilty things, hung down their heads in shame; and proceeding to the North-west, engaged himself in stern Tapas in the dark woods that clothe the charming slopes of the Himalaya.

Thus have you heard from me, the narrative of Uma the daughter of the mountain. Now shall I relate unto you, the origin of Ganga, the elder sister."

CHAPTER 37.

The Birth of Kartikeya.

Meanwhile, the Devas wanted a general to lead them against the Asuras and they approached the Grand-Sire and prayed unto him for one. "Lord, he whom you gave unto us to lead our armies, is ever engaged in Tapas along with his consort Uma. Advise us what to do next. Do we not look unto you for help, guidance and support? The welfare of the worlds is dearer unto you ; do you point out the course of action best for us."

The four-faced One calmed the fears of the Shining Ones and spoke to them encouragingly. "The words of the Great Mother shall prove true and you shall not have children born unto you of your own wives ; never shall it be otherwise. Now, Agni shall bring forth a son of Ganga, who is even now purifying your worlds. He shall be the General of the Gods and the terror of his foes. Uma, her sister, shall take the child unto her heart and he shall be to her even as the child of her womb."

These words rejoiced the hearts of the Gods ; they took reverent leave of their Leader and went back even as

they came. Proceeding to the Kailasa, rich in metals, gold and gems, they directed Agni to bring forth a son to accomplish their ends. "Oh, thou ! the Leader of the Gods and the Light of the world ! help us in our need and bring us good. Of great splendour thou, direct thy energy towards Ganga, the daughter of the Monarch of mountains."

"It shall be even as you desire" replied the Lord of the Fire and approaching Ganga, said to her, "The gods desire that thou bear in thy womb my unfailing energy and bring forth a son to serve their purpose." "With great pleasure" replied she and assumed a divine form, whereat he marvelled greatly ; and discharging his fiery energy on all sides, he permeated her in all her limbs with his fierce might. And Ganga was penetrated through and through, even unto the utmost ends of her body. But it was too much even for her, the all purifying One ; and she cried out unto the Priest of the Gods in utter helplessness. "Lord, I feel powerless to bear within me thy terrible energy that is even now consuming me." Even as she spoke, the flames grew and grew until the agony became too intense for her.

Thereupon, Agni, out of the great pity that wrung his heart, said unto her, "If so, Ganga, let out that which is in thy womb at the foot of Himavan ; may be it will relieve thee of your pain and misery." The holy river gladly hastened to obey him and the resplendent Embryo was directed through the various streams that had their origin in her. And what came forth from her womb was of the hue of the molten gold and was known in the world from that day as Gold, pure and shining. From the pungent element thereof were produced copper and black iron, while the impure parts of it were converted into brass and lead. Thus were the diverse metals brought forth into existence and grew apace. The mighty mountain turned of the colour of gold and the forests around it were filled with the unbearably

bright energy of that which proceeded from Ganga's womb. Thenceforth that gold was known among men by the name Jatarupa, radiant even as fire. The trees, the grass, the creepers and everything therein was converted into gold, Kanchana, so called.

Indra and the other gods arranged that the Krittikas should nurse the boy. They took him as their child and upon a promise thereunto from the Devas, suckled him. "This boy," said they, "nourished by you from the milk of your breasts, shall take your name and the world shall know him as Kartikeya. Unparalleled shall be his renown in the worlds." The Krittikas washed him free and pure of the foetal impurities that adhered to his body, when he dropped from the womb of Ganga at the foot of the Himalaya. "Skanda he shall be called" exclaimed the Devas, "as he was dropped from the womb;" and Kartikeya was known by that name also.

The Divine boy shone in his supreme radiance even as the smokeless flame. Milk streamed forth from the breasts of the Krittikas and wonderful to behold ! the child put forth six heads and six mouths to draw his sustenance from his six foster mothers. In the short space of a day, he grew unto his full height and strength. Of matchless grace and beauty, it was but child's play to him to put to rout the assembled hosts of the Daityas. The Celestial hosts gathered round him with peans of joy and with common consent crowned him as their Lord and Leader and installed him in his proud post.

Thus have I narrated unto you, Rama, the wonderful episode of Ganga and the birth of Kartikeya from her. Supremely holy is this and he whose heart is drawn in devotion and reverence, towards the Divine Child, his days shall never grow less on earth ; and blessed with sons and grand-

sons without end, he shall, when he quits that body, be taken unto the highest heavens, even where Kartikeya resides."

CHAPTER 38.

Sagara.

Here ended his tale and Visvamitra took up another narrative. "Rama, my son, there lived an ancestor of thine, by name Sagara, a righteous ruler and a great hero ; and Ayodhya was his capital. His heart yearned for a son, but in vain. Kesini, the eldest daughter of the ruler of Vidarbha, was his first wife, truthful of speech and righteous minded ; and Sumati, the fairest of the daughters of the earth, was his second wife, the child of Arishtanemi. He retired to the Bhrigu Prasravana among the Himalayas, and along with his wives performed stern Tapas. A hundred years passed over his resolute head, when Bhrigu, the best of those that speak truth, was pleased by his Tapas, conferred upon him a boon. "A mighty race shall spring out of thy loins, and thy glory shall be unparalleled on the earth and undying. One son shalt thou have, through whom thy race shall continue on earth ; and thy other wife shall give thee 60,000 sons." Thereupon the queens approached him reverently with joined hands and glad hearts. "Thy words shall ever come to pass ; but which of us shall have one son and which many ? Deign thou to enlighten us on this vital point." "It is for you to choose," replied the righteous Bhrigu, "one son who will continue your line or many sons, famous valiant and energetic beyond conception. Suit yourselves."

Then Kesini choose before the king a single son to propagate the race ; and Sumati, the niece of Garuda, chose

60,000 sons famous and mighty. His purpose served, the king and his queens returned to their kingdom.

In course of time, Kesini, the elder, brought forth a son who was named Asamanjas, while Sumati conceived a lump of flesh. They broke it and forth issued 60,000 sons. The nurses brought them up in vessels of clarified butter, until they arrived to years of maturity.

The eldest son, Asamanjas, amused himself with throwing the children of the townsmen into the dark waters of the Sarayu and laughed at their dying agonies ; so, yielding to the prayers of his subjects and to his own unerring sense of justice and duty, Sagara banished that wicked son of his, a terror to his people and an eyesore to the good. But Amsuman, his valiant son, endeared himself to all, high and low and was the idol of their hearts.

Long years after, the thought came to Sagara that he would celebrate a sacrifice. He consulted his priests and chaplains well versed in the Vedas and set about the holy rite."

CHAPTER 39.

Sagara's Horse-Sacrifice.

When the narrative came to an end, Rama said to Visvamitra with a pleased heart " Hail to thee, thou Holy One ! Great is my desire to hear the story in all its details of how my ancestor celebrated that sacrifice ?" Greatly amused at the eagerness displayed by Rama, Visvamitra replied with a smile. " Nothing would give me greater pleasure. See you yon abode of Snow and Ice, the sky-topped Himalaya. He is the father-in-law of the Black Throated One and faces

proudly the far famed Vindhya ; and between them lies a broad and similing land. Regard it as one of the holiest spots on the earth, for, countless have been the sacrifices performed therein ; and your ancestor of honored memory, the righteous Sagara, celebrated his Aswamedha there. Amsuman, the favourite grandson of the monarch, was directed to go along with the consecrated horse and guard it. A mighty warrior was he, King Sagara and a famous general ; and while he was duly conducting the sacrifice, Indra assumed the shape of a Rakshasa and spirited away the consecrated horse. Thereat, the sacrificial priests cried out to the king " The consecrated horse has been taken away on this all important day. Slay the robber and bring back the horse. Such a defect as this is fraught with danger to all of us. So, see to it that the sacrifice comes to a safe and speedy end."

Thereupon, the mighty monarch turned to his sons (there were 60,000 of them) and addressed them in the pride of his power and glory. " No room see I for any Rakshasa to interfere with this sacrifice of mine, conducted as it is by such able priests as these, with souls purified by powerful Mantras. So, heed ye these words of mine ; go forth, my sons and search this sea-girt earth through and through, every inch of it if ye come not upon them. And I shall stay here, consecrated, with my grandson and the priests, till the horse come back."

Ordered thus by their honored sire, the valiant sons of Sagara issued forth with on their fearless quest with cheerful hearts. They searched the surface of the earth from end to end, but found not the horse nor the thief. Then they began to delve into the earth, a yojana every one of them, with their adamantine nails, with tridents hard as thunderbolts, and with terrible ploughshares. Whereupon, the patient Earth, thus pierced in her vitals, began to emit loud cries of distress, rendered all the more terrible by the fearful shrieks of the

dying Nagas, Asuras, Rakshasas and other mighty creatures, whom, in their wantonness, the infuriated sons of Sagara slaughtered by thousands. Yet they dug into the bowels of the earth for 60,000 yojanas and ranged far and wide through the mountainous Jambudwipa. Thereupon the gods, the Gandhravas, the Asuras and the Pannagas, sought out the Great Ancient and addressed him with affrighted and woe-begone countenances. "Lord ! behold these wicked sons of Sagara piercing into the very bowels of the earth and slaying the creatures therein by hundreds and by thousands. Hear them shouting. 'Lo ! there goes the thief ! there is the daring wretch who has laid his impious hands ' on the sacred horse and spoiled the precious sacrifice! and countless myriads go down before their blind fury.'

CHAPTER 40.

The Wrath of Kapila.

The Father of all beings listened to these words of the trembling Celestials who were out of their wits through fear of destruction. "This earth" said he "and everything it contains belongs to the Lord Vasudeva, who, as Kapila, supports it for all time ; and these wicked princes shall, of a truth, be consumed by the fire of His wrath. The delving of the earth and the destruction of the short-lived sons of Sagara have been fore-ordained."

The celestials departed to their abodes with a glad heart. And great was the uproar caused by the valiant sons of Sagara delving into the bowels of the earth. Having thus sought above and below, they came back to their sire and said to him reverently. "We have searched the entire earth through and through and put to death powerful and mighty beings, Gods, Danavas, Rakshasas, Pisachas, Uragas, and

Kinnaras, by hundreds ; but we have not set our eyes upon the horse nor the daring robber. Hail ! mighty monarch ! we await thy further orders."

Thereat Sagara was exceedingly wroth and cried out "Delve further and yet further, even unto the innermost limits. Find me out the robber and come back with the horse at any cost."

Thus ordered thereto, the 60,000 sons of Sagara dug even unto the Rasatala, until they came upon the huge elephant Virupaksha, supporting on his head mountain-like, the entire globe with its mountains, hills, forests, rivers, towns and hamlets. When the Mighty One shakes his weary head during the Parva days to ease himself, then men have what they call an earthquake. They went round him and paid him due worship, whereafter they pursued their undeviating course. Having pierced through the Rasatala in the east, they turned to the south and lighted upon another elephant of vast proportions, Mahapadma, likewise supporting the entire globe on his head—a sight that filled them with amazement. They went round him too and piercing through the west, observed another elephant, Saumanasa, who bore the earth in that quarter. Him too they reverenced and made kind enquiries of, after which they set about to pierce towards the North, when there came to view the snow-white Bhadra, of immense proportions, upon whose broad head rested but lightly the entire mass of the globe in that quarter. Having paid unto him due reverence, they took leave of him and pierced yet deeper into the earth ; coming to the North-east they dug deeper yet, furious with disappointment, that endowed them with superhuman strength and fierce speed.

When, lo ! there appeared before their startled eyes Kapila, the incarnation of the Eternal Vasudeva ; and hard by, the long-sought-for horse, grazing quietly, the innocent

cause of all their trouble and misfortune. Almost besides themselves with joy at their success, they rushed forth with eager hearts ; but, the sight of the Holy One, whom they concluded to be the robber of the horse, roused them to insensate fury ; and with eyes inflamed with wrath, they flew at the sage, armed with spades and swords, shovels ploughshares and mattocks. "Stop thief ! stop thief !" not one of them was mute. "You are the wicked wretch that spirited away the sacrificial horse and right dearly shall you pay for it. Know you who have come for you?. Even the sons of Sagara, the terrible." Hardly were those impious words out of the mouth of the doomed sons of Sagara, than the wrath of the mighty sage blazed forth. 'Hum,' he cried ; the eye had scarcely time to wink, when the 60,000 sons of Sagara vanished from sight ; a heap of ashes marked the place where they had stood a moment ago, in their proud strength and fiery manhood.

CHAPTER 41.

Amsuman's Quest.

Finding his sons had been away an unconscionable long time, Sagara turned to his grandson who was resplendent in his own energy, "Brave you are and well educated ; you are not behind your forefathers in prowess or energy. Bring me news of your parents and of him who has made away with the horse. The beings that inhabit the interior of the Earth are of terrible might and power ; arm yourself against them with your bow and sword. Offer reverence to those that deserve it and spare not those that might seek to hinder you ; come back unto me with news of success and enable me to complete this sacrifice."

Thus directed by his noble grandsire, Amsuman set out in hot haste on his quest, armed with sword and bow. Following his grandsire's direction, he soon came upon the path dug into the bowels of the earth by his valiant forefathers. He took that away and came upon the Dig-gaja honored by the Daityas, Danavas, Rakshasas, Pisachas, Pannagas, and Uragas. He went round it, inquired after its welfare and respectfully asked for news of his parents, as also of the horse-thief; to which the Elephant replied "Son of Asamanjas! soon shalt thou come back with success and the horse with you." The other Elephants, whom he came upon, confirmed the glad tidings. "Soon shall we see you come back honored and with the long-lost horse." Extremely intelligent and no mean speakers themselves, they encouraged him with the fresh hopes by their prophetic assertions. On he hastened to where his ill-starred fathers lay, a heap of ashes. His heart burst with grief at the miserable sight and in a loud voice he bewailed the untimely and shameful fate of his uncles. And there was the sacrificial horse grazing all innocently near by, as if *it* was not their evil destiny.

He desired to offer libations of water into their manes, but, search as he would, not a drop of water could he find anywhere. Casting his eyes around, he espied the uncle of his uncles, even Garuda, the Lord of Birds, shining with the brilliance of the Lord of Fire. And to him spake the valiant Garuda "Grieve not, noble son; they deserved their death. They perished even in their pride, burnt to ashes by the inscrutable might of Kapila's glances; and to these, libations of earthly water would do no good. Nothing but the sacred waters of Ganga, the eldest daughter of Himavan, the all purifying stream, should wash these ungodly ones reduced to a heap of ashes; *then and then alone* shalt thou be able to raise these 60,000 victims of foolish temerity to

the Abode of the Blessed. Take thou the horse back with thee and enable thy grandfather to complete the sacrifice."

And the valiant Amsuman obeyed him with a heavy heart. Soon he stood before his grandsire and acquainted him with the details of his quest, the unhappy fate of his sires and of the advice of Garuda. Sagara listened to the terrible news with a breaking heart and hastened to complete the rite according to the rules. He returned to his capital, but, he could not decide unto himself what course to adopt in the matter of bringing down Ganga to the terrestrial regions ; and thus, in doubt and anxiety, in aimless thought and ceaseless remorse, did he pass away to the Regions of the Immortals. And his reign on earth was 32,000 years.

CHAPTER 42.

Bhagiratha's Penance.

When Sagara was gathered unto his forefathers, his subjects decided that his righteous grandson Amsuman should reign over them. He was a mighty monarch, Amsuman and bore a son by name Dilipa, of peerless fame. And resigning the kingdom unto his hands, did Amsuman seek the Holy Heights to perform fearful austerities. Years 32,000 passed away and unto him in his forest hermitage came the call to Heaven, to which he departed, crowned with undying glory. And Dilipa, coming to know of the destruction of this grandfather, was overwhelmed with grief and at a loss how to act. " How shall I bring down Ganga ? How shall I offer them libations of holy water ? How shall I deliver them from their miserable plight ? " This sorrow ate into his heart, day and night. And unto him endowed with Divine Wisdom through his steadfast adherence to

Right, was born a son, Bhagiratha, who, in saintliness of character, excelled his father, if that were possible. Many a sacrifice did Dilipa celebrate ; and for 32,000 years the people rejoiced under his benign rule. But, unable to come to any definite conclusion as to how to raise his fore-fathers to heaven, he died of a broken heart, having lived, as he thought, an aimless life. He installed his son in his place and won the Heaven of Indra by his peerless merit.

Bhagiratha, the royal sage, had everything he could wish for—righteousness, spiritual might ; but he yearned in vain for a son to continue his line on the earth. So, entrusting his kingdom to his able ministers, he resolved to bring down Ganga and he took himself to the sacred Gokarna, where he spent long years, thousands of them, in performing terrible austerities. Placing himself in the midst of five fires, he withdrew his senses into his heart ; with his arms raised high above his head, he bent all his powerful will to accomplish his purpose, taking but a slight sustenance once a month. Then unto him thus engaged in his holy task, there came . Brahma, the Lord of beings, the Grandsire, and in his wake, the Angels of Light and spoke thus to the high-souled One, “ Bhagiratha ! Lord of men ! pleased am I with you and the unparalleled Tapas you have gone through. Ask of me what you wilt and you shall have it.” And unto the Great Father the noble-hearted king replied with reverently clasped hands, “ Lord ! If I have found favour with Thee, if my Tapas is to bear any fruit ; even this I would have at Thy hands. May the sons of Sagara, every one of them, receive libations water at my hands. May the holy waters of celestial Ganga flow over their ashes. May the Great Ones rejoice in heaven for ever. And let me have a son to gladden my heart. And more than any other thing, this boon would I crave of Thee. May the race of Iskhwaku ever remain upon Earth.”

To him spake back, in words sweet and glorious, the Four-faced One, the great Fashioner of Men and Worlds, " Mighty hero thou, Bhagiratha, it is a royal request and shall be even as thou desirest. The royal race of Ikshwaku shall owe its undying fame to thee. Ganga, the first-born of the lofty Himavan, shall obey thy behests ; but the Earth cannot stand the force of the Celestial River as it comes down from the regions on high. I see no one that could bear it safely, unless it be the Wielder of the Trident, even Mahadeva. Hence, do thou seek to engage him in that mighty task." Having thus advised the king and having directed Ganga herself as to what she should do, he went back to his Radiant World, accompanied by the celestial hosts.

CHAPTER 43.

Descent of Ganga.

So spake Brahma and went away ; and Bhagiratha went through another year of hard austerities. With arms lifted high over his head, straight as a pine, motionless as a rock, he supported himself solely on his toes. Thus he remained day and night, the air his only food, self-controlled and calm.

When the dreadful year came to an end, Maheswara, the Spouse of the golden-hued Uma, stood before the royal sage ; and the World-honored spake, in accents sweet and grand, " You have won my favor and I shall do your pleasure. I shall even bear upon my head the Daughter of the Mountain."

Thereupon the noble river Ganga, honored of all beings, increased her size and force unbearable and from the lofty

heavens, fell upon the peaceful head of Siva. "For," thought she, of irresistible might, "I will carry away Sankara along with me, and enter the nether regions." The Three-eyed Hara was highly wroth at this overweening pride of Ganga and resolved to hide her from all sight. So, when the Holy Stream fell on the sacred head of Siva, even like unto Himavan, she could never come down on earth, though she tried her best, entangled as she was in the maze of Mahadeva's lofty coils of matted hair. And her senses giddy with aimless wandering through the pathless labyrinths, for countless years she found not her way out. Seeing which, Bhagiratha again set himself to please Siva through austerities stern.

Siva's heart grew soft towards him and he let her down gently to the earth, even where the Lake Bindu stood, Ganga came down from his coil in seven streams, of which Hladini, Plavini and Nalini carried their pure and holy waters to the east; Suchakshu, Sita and Sindhu flowed through the happy kingdoms of the west; and the last followed in the wake of the royal sage Bhagiratha, who, shining in his lustre, went before in his beautiful car. From the high heavens she fell on the head of Siva and from thence to the earth; and her waters rushed fast and furious with a mighty sound, rendered the more terrible by the countless fish, tortoises, porpoises, and other aquatic creatures, ceaselessly falling from on high. And hosts of the Celestials came there, blazing in their effulgence, to behold that wonderful Descent of Ganga into the regions of the Earth—Devas, Rishis, Gandharvas, Yakshas, and Siddhas; all seated on their countless swift-coursing cars huge as cities, on horses and noble elephants they stationed themselves along the firmament, which, without the slightest suspicion of a cloud, shone as if with the splendor of myriads of suns, thrown back from the bands of Celestials and their brilliant ornaments. The porpoises and the fish falling down the

waters flashed like lightnings along the welkin ; and the thousand white sprays thrown up by the waves on all sides reminded one of the autumn clouds with crowds of swans flying athwart them. Now swift, now slow ; now straight like an arrow, now crooked like a miser's heart ; now with a sudden fall, now shooting upwards ; now mighty waves striking against one another and rising high in the air, anon fall upon the earth with a sound of thunder. Descending upon the head of Siva and from there to the earth, the waters became purer and holier. The gods, the sages and the Gandharvas that came down to the earth, touched the Holy Waters, rendered unmeasurably so by having come into contact with the body of Siva. They that had fallen down on earth through curses dire, washed themselves pure of their sins in its sacred waters and regained their lost homes in the heavens ; the whole world rejoiced thereat and their souls were white as driven snow.

The royal sage Bhagiratha went before on his splendid car ; and Ganga, obedient to his least wish, followed in his footsteps. Gods, Sages, Daityas Danavas, Rakshasas, Gandharvas, Yakasas, Kinnaras, Uragas, and the Apsarasas followed joyfully the Holy River, that, teeming with countless aquatic creatures, coursed after the car of Bhagiratha. Wherever the king went, there was the Holy Ganga, the first and the best of streams, the destroyer of all sins. On its way, she took it into her wilful heart to flow through the sacrificial grounds of the holy sage, Jahnu, and swept away everything therein. Such pride and audacity worked up the mighty sage to an uncontrollable pitch of anger and he drew into himself the waters of Ganga. Verily it was wonderful to be hold. The gods, the sages, and the Gandharvas were struck with amazement and sought to soothe the wounded dignity of the great sage by every mark of honor and respect. "This Ganga" said they "shall be

henceforth known as the Daughter of Jahnu." Then the sage of immeasurable energy was somewhat mollified and let out the waters through his ears ; and hence she earned the names "The Daughter of Jahnu" and "Jahnava." Again she resumed her course behind the car of Bhagiratha, until she reached the vast ocean ; and thence proceeded towards the Rasatala for the accomplishment of his purpose.

The royal sage, having, after unheard--of difficulties, taken Ganga along with him to the nether regions, cast his eyes, with a sinking heart, upon his ancestors reduced to a heap of ashes. The holy waters of the Ganga bathed the pile and the owners thereof, purified of their sins, ascended to the High Heavens.

CHAPTER 44.

The End of the Quest.

Accompanied by Ganga, the king reached the ocean and came to that place below the Earth where his ancestors lay reduced to ashes.

When they had been washed by the holy waters, Brahma, the Lord of the worlds, came to the place and said, "The 60,000 sons of the noble Sagara have been freed from their evil fate and raised by you to heaven, even like unto the gods themselves ; and *as long as the waters of the ocean shall endure on earth* even so long shall these enjoy the bliss of Swarga along with the Immortal Dwellers thereof. This Ganga shall be to you as a first-born daughter and shall be celebrated in the world under the names you gave her—Ganga, Tripathaga, Divya, and Bhagirathi. She flows through the three worlds and hence her name Tripathaga. Offer libations of water unto the manes

of your grandfathers, every one of them and accomplish your vow. They that went before you were unable to accomplish their object, highly famous and born of righteous ancestry though they were. Amsuman of unequalled energy, desired to bring down Ganga and succeeded not. The royal sage, your sire Dilipa, of noble attributes and like unto the great sages in Spiritual Energy, wrought hard to bring down Ganga, but the rays of success dispelled not the gloom of his heart, albeit he was unswerving in the discharge of his kingly duties and equal to me in ascetic merit. But, you have been able to accomplish your high resolve ; and, best of men that you are, you have earned the highest glory ever given unto mortals to possess and ever approved of by the best; you have reached the loftiest pinnacle of righteousness, in that you have brought down the holy Ganga. Bathe in the sacred waters and rise pure and endowed with high religious merit. Forget not to offer libations of water unto the manes of your ancestors. I shall go back unto my world and give you leave to do the same." Thus spoke the Grand-sire of all beings, the great Brahma and departed to his seat in the highest heaven, even as he came.

Thereupon, the royal sage Bhagiratha discharged his duties by his fore-fathers, even as the holy books lay it down ; his vow accomplished, he returned to his capital with enhanced lustre and glory and ruled his kingdom well and wisely. The world rejoiced when the king came back again among them and men knew not sorrow nor anxiety under him, but lived in happy content, every desire of theirs gratified.

Thus have I narrated unto you, at great length, Rama, the episode of Ganga. All hail to you ! thou noble one and may every good go with you. Let us disperse, for the time of the evening prayers is close at hand. This narrative is of extraordinary virtue ; it realises for you all your wishes—fame, length of years, offspring, and the highest heavens. And

you have no better way of pleasing the Pitris and the Devas than by reciting this before the regenerate ones. He who listens to this with whole—souled attention and a devout heart, never desires in vain ; his sins fall away from him and his days increase on earth and his glory.”

CHAPTER 45.

The Churning of the Ocean.

He ended in the midst of profound silence ; for, in awe-struck silence his hearers drank in his words with their ears and hearts. Rama was the first to break the spell and speak. “ Reverend Master ! these episodes of the coming down of Ganga and the digging of the ocean by the sons of Sagara, how wonderful and strange !”

The audience took respectful leave of the sage to seek repose ; but, the princes lay awake, pondering over the marvellous recital, until the small hours of the dawn stole upon them. They rose betimes and having gone through the morning observances, approached Visvamitra and said, “ Holy One ! the night passed away all too soon, revolving over the wonderful stories narrated by you. A boat, specially furnished for such holy ascetics as you, awaits your pleasure. Shall we cross this sacred stream over to the other bank ?

“ So be it ” replied Visvamitra, and very soon they were on the other side of the river. They rested there awhile and from where they sat the towers of the renowned Visala rose into view. Soon they resumed their journey and were on their way towards the capital that vied in magnificence with the very abode of the Immortals. Rama took the opportunity to question the Master about the city. “ May I request to know which royal race rules here at present ?”

Visvamitra caught the hint and proceeded to recount the past history of Visala. "In the last Krita Yuga, the sons of Diti were very powerful ; while the sons of Aditi were mighty and walked in the way of Good. 'How shall we escape the decrepitude of age and the horrors of death?' So thought they, the Devas and the Asuras. At length, they hit upon a plan and resolved to churn the Milky Ocean and partake of the Ambrosia that would spring therefrom. That would ensure them Immortality. Well, they set to work in dead earnest ; the Milky Ocean was the churning pot and the Mount Mandara, the churn ; Vasuki, the king of serpents, was the rope, and they churned with unabated energy for thousands of years. Then, Vasuki, their rope, gave out, and vomited deadly poison from his many mouths ; while, in the height of his agony, he crunched to atoms the hard granite of the rocks.

First rose the fiery venom Halahala, and began to consume the affrighted worlds and everything therein—men and gods, birds and beasts. The Lords of Light sought the presence of Mahadeva, in his Home of Ice and Snow and lifted up their hearts and hands to him in humble prayer. "Lord of Beings ! Rudra of terrible energy ! Giver of all Good ! we take our refuge in Thee and seek the shadow of Thy feet. Save us, Oh Lord ! from this cruel Fate. Thou art our stay and support."

And to them thus engaged in heart-whole prayer and humble entreaty, there came the Lord Vishnu, his broad shoulders graced with the mighty Conch and Discus. And to the Wielder of the Trident spake he in accents of persuasive melody. "These gods here, churn the Milky Ocean and have come to offer you the first fruits of their hard labor. For," said he with a charming smile. "You, brother mine, are the first-born among them and it behoves you to accept this Halahala as your portion and save them from destruction."

He disappeared then and there, even while the sound of his sweet voice was still in the ears of his hearers. And the Moon-Crested One, moved thereunto by the abject fear of the gods and the request of Vishnu, repaired unto the Ocean of Milk and swallowed the dread Halahaia, even as though it were a delicious draught of Ambrosia. His mission of mercy accomplished, he returned to his mountain-home and left the gods to resume their arduous work.

But, a fresh misfortune was in store for them—the Mount Mandara, their churn, sank from view, deep deep into the abysmal regions of Patala. Once again the Angels of Heaven, raised their voices in earnest supplication to the Guardian of the Worlds, even the Lord Vishnu. “All creation lives and moves in Thee and has its being ; but we are proud to claim a place in the warmest corner of Thy heart. Lead us out of this mishap and find a way to keep the mountain firm, while we churn the sea.”

And Hari, the Soul of Mercy, laid himself in the deep waters as a mighty Tortoise and bare the mountain on his back, while his extended hands grasped it at the top and steadied the whirling mass ; and wonderful to behold ! he stood among the gods and churned as assiduously as any.

A thousand years of hard toil and there arose from amidst the seething waters, Dhanvantari, the God of Health, with staff and water-pot. Next the lovely Apsarasas, sixty thousand in number (their attendants, Rama dear, are past count). They were so called (Apsarasas) since the Charming Ones formed the essence (Rasa) that sprang from the churning of the mighty waters (apas.) The gods would have none of them, nor the Asuras ; hence they came to be common women, free to all.

Next came forth Varuni, the daughter of Varuna, the Lord of Waters, and looked about for some one who

would take her to wife. But the sons of Diti turned away from her in haughtiness and pride ; whereat, the gods took that stainless beauty unto themselves with a glad heart. Hence the name ‘Asuras’ that the sons of Diti went by (those that accepted not Sura or Varuni); while the gods rejoiced in the appellation of Suras (the Lords of Sura).

Next Uchchaisravas, the Prince of horses ; then Kaustubha, the Gem of divine lustre ; and last, the Amrita, the Waters of Immortality.

It was the apple of discord thrown in the midst of the celestials and they fought for it tooth and nail. Terrible was the battle that ensued between the sons of Aditi on the one hand and the Asuras, and the Rakshasas on the other ; and the hearts of all beings quaked in wild dismay thereat. Fearful was the carnage among the Asuras, and they were about exterminated. When the ungodly sons of Diti were thus laid low, the Lord Vishnu, of unthinkable might, appeared among the combatants as a fascinating siren (a dream of beauty to lure away the hearts of the unrighteous ones ; verily an illusion cast by the Master of Illusions), and bare away the hard-won Amrita ; and they that tried to bar his way, the unfortunate Asuras, fell no more to rise. For was he not the ruler of the Universe, the Supreme One, who waxes not nor wanes ? Thus were the impious brood of Diti overwhelmed by the Angels of Peace, the servants of the Lord ; and Indra, their king and leader, regained his empire over the worlds, gods and mortals, saints and sages and ruled wisely and well.

CHAPTER 46.

The birth of the Maruts.

When Diti saw that her numerous sons, the Asuras, were destroyed by the Devas, her heart was heavy with

grief ; approaching her husband Kasyapa, she prayed to him in all humility, " My children have been done to death, every one of them, by the powerful Devas, sprung of thee. I pray thee extend thy grace unto me and enable me to go through a course of austerities, whereby I might beget a son who would be the death of Indra."

Kasyapa, of boundless might, heard her out and his heart was wrung with pity at the mother's grief " Be it as you desire. Observe for a thousand years a strict vow and holy, pure in body and heart ; and you shall have of me a son who will lord it over the three worlds." He passed his hands over her body, gave her his blessings and departed to resume his Tapas.

With a glad heart, Diti betook herself to the holy Kusaplavana and took upon herself to observe a long and difficult vow. And upon her thus employed, did Indra wait upon with humble reverence all the time. He supplied her with the sacred grass, firesticks, water, fruits, roots and fire and every other article that she might require ; he pressed her limbs when she was tired, fanned her when she was hot, and was ever her right hand and shadow.

Years 9990 passed away in this wise, when one day, Diti turned with a bright face to Indra (he was ever at her side anticipating her least wish) and said, " My dear, your father Kasyapa was kind enough to accord me a boon, that I would get an excellent son, if I observed a course of religious practices he instructed me in. Only ten short years of this severe ordeal and you will have the pleasure of beholding your younger brother. True it is I resolved upon bringing forth a son who would put you down ; but, my heart has been won over to you by your sweet kindness and watchful service. It shall be my care to bring about

perfect harmony between you both, so that the three worlds shall rest in peace and happiness."

And upon them so speaking, the heat of noon came on apace ; and Diti, worn out with her fasts and penances, chanced, (inexorable Fate impelling her thereto) to fall asleep in a careless posture, the hair of her head brushing her feet. Indra, ever on the watch for the slightest slip, saw that she was impure and laughed in joy and derision. " Fool that you are ! you fondly imagine you have successfully accomplished your long course of Tapas and pride yourself on being about to attain the result of your severe efforts." Then the dauntless Lord of the Angels made his entrance into her body and with his weapon, the sharp-pointed Vajra, hacked the embryo into seven pieces ; whereat, it began to set up a loud and pitiful wail.

" Cry not, cry not," replied Indra ; but all the same he went on with his dreadful task.

Diti awoke ; and from the depths of her agonised heart broke out the words, 'Slay not, slay not.'

Indra desisted at the commands of his mother ; coming out of her body, he stood before her with reverently clasped hands and said, " Mother mine ! you happened to fall asleep during the day and that with the hair of your head touching your feet ; you had rendered yourself impure and I but took advantage of the favourable opportunity to rid myself of a rival who was growing to be my Fate. It behoves you to pardon me this offence of mine."

CHAPTER 47.

The birth of the Maruts.

Overwhelmed with sorrow and disappointment, Diti turned to the invincible Indra and said, " Oh thou, the

destroyer of the Asura Vala ! verily it was through *my* fault that this embryo of mine has been cut to pieces and rendered useless. No blame is yours, for, you but did your duty and the hand of Fate directed you. However, it would give me great pleasure if you would grant me a request of mine. These seven pieces shall, gifted with forms of Light, rule over the various air-currents as their Informing Deities. Gagana in the world of Brahma, Sparsa in yours, Vayu in the Bhuvan Loka and Anila, Prana, Pranesvara and Jiva in the four quarters of the world of mortals. These shall range the various regions in peace and happiness and take the name of 'Maruts' that you have given them. It behoves you to do them this favor at least ; and I doubt not that it will redound to your own glory and power."

So prayed the much-stricken mother, in accents sweet and persuasive ; and Indra bowed reverently over his folded palms and replied, "Mother mine! on my head and eyes be thy commands. Thy sons, these seven brothers of mine, shall course through all the regions, illuminating them with glorious forms of divine lustre". Thus did Indra and his mother Diti make a covenant, which he faithfully observed ever after. And, mutually pleased, they departed to the worlds of the Immortals. And, Rama ! *this* is the very spot where Diti was waited upon by Indra during her long and severe course of austerities.

The royal Ikshvaku begat from Alambusa, a son by name Visala, who was the founder of the city that goes by his name. And Hemachandra, Suchandra, Dhumrasva, Srinjaya, Sahadeva, Kusasva, Somadatta of great lustre and renown, and Kakutstha, succeeded one another, father and son. And Sumati, like unto the Gods in radiance, rules at present over the happy Visala and is verily invincible. Through the blessings of their founder Ikshvaku

his descendants by Visala are gifted with length of years, steadfastness in virtue and unparalleled prowess. Rest we here for the night and to-morrow you will have the pleasure of being welcomed by the royal Janaka."

Meanwhile, Sumati, the righteous and holy, was informed of the approach of the great Visvamitra ; and with his priests and kinsmen hastened to offer him welcome. He extended unto his honored guest the highest rites of hospitality and with folded palms, reverently inquired after his welfare. " First and best of sages ! thrice-blessed am I, in that you have, of your own accord, been pleased to honor my humble abode with your sacred presence. Surely, great is the favor I have found in your eyes and you have made me the envy of the three worlds."

CHAPTER 48.

Ahalya.

After mutual enquiries of welfare, Sumali addressed himself to the Holy One and said " Hail to thee ! these youths, who are they ? God-like in their might and of lordly gait, even as the proud monarch of the forests or the majestic elephant or the tiger or the bull ; with large and lustrous eyes, like unto the rosy petals of the blown lotus ; combining in themselves the graces of the boy and the youth. Lo ! how they shine in their martial attire, bow in hand, the sword by their sides and the well-filled quivers peeping from behind. More like those heavenly Twins, the ideals of divine grace and beauty, the Aswins. Be these the gods themselves, come down of their sweet will to this dull earth of ours, from their bright home on high ? How chances it they have deigned to come all the way here and on foot ? What seek they ? Whom are they here for ? The Twin Lords of the Day and the Night grace not

the sky more than these princes this fortunate land. Face, features, gestures, gait, speech, the keenest eye cannot distinguish the one from the other. These warlike youths, these lords of men, why have they trod this wild path and dreadful? May I know the truth that lies behind this?"

And to his wondering ears did the sage relate the details of their journey—their stay at the Siddhasrama, and the destruction of the Rakshasas at their hands. Mightily pleased was Sumati to have as his guests the noble sons of the ruler of Ayodhya and right royally did he entertain the valiant princes who deserved it so richly. They spent there a happy night and at day-break left for Mithila.

The charming capital of Janaka filled the sages with wonder and delight, and they could not praise it enough.

On their way, Rama noticed a lonely hermitage at the outskirts of the city, old, dilapidated and untenanted. At once he turned to his Master and said "This holy place reminds one of the spot that was graced by your angust self, but for the fact that no ascetics bless it with their presence. Who dwelt here last, Master, if I may be allowed to inquire?"

It required but very little inducement to make Visvamitra hold eloquent discourse on the antecedents of the spot. "Listen to me while I narrate to you the wonderful train of events that culminated in the curse of this lonely hermitage by the great-souled Gautama. One of the fairest spots on earth this was, when he dwelt herein and with his wife, Ahalya, engaged in a long and severe course of Tapas. Why, the very gods frequented it for its rare beauty and almost envied Gautama the possession of it."

The Lord of the celestials loved the fair Ahalya and was ever on his watch for an opportunity to accomplish his wishes; and one day he got it when the sage was away from

his cottage. Approaching Ahalya in the guise of the holy Gautama, the Holder of Vajra exclaimed, "Oh thou ! the fairest form that ever graced the Earth below or the Worlds above, a merciless tyrant is Love ; and no rules nor restrictions that man can make, have power to stay his will. I am not master of myself. Full well do I know it is not your season, but what would you have me do ? Fold me in your flower soft arms and let me lose myself in an endless dream of bliss".

She knew it was the Ruler of the Celestials that spake those words of delicious love, and not her husband, the sage of restrained passions ; but, deep in her heart lurked a tender feeling for the powerful Lord of the Immortals. She lent an ear to the tempter and —was lost. Her long-deferred hopes realized, she spoke to him out of a glad heart.

"Well pleased am I, Lord : and now leave thou this place ere it is too late. One word before we part. Let no fancied sense of security blind thee to the perils of our position. Take good care of thyself and stand between me and the dread consequence of my act of folly".

But Indra laughed away her fears and replied " Fair one ! Never can I thank you enough for your sweet condescension to my unworthy self ; and now, have I your leave to go ?"

He spoke and hastened out of the cottage, all afraid of Gautama, whom his fluttering heart saw everywhere.

And lo ! there advanced towards him the subject of his thoughts and fears, the holy Gautama, about to enter his hermitage. Gods and Asuras stood in hushed awe of him, such was his inconceivable might, engendered of severe austerities. Fresh from his bath in the sin-cleansing waters, he drew near, the sacred grass in his hand and the

bundle of firesticks. The steady flame of the smokeless Fire shone not with more lustre nor was more terrible in its all-consuming energy. The mighty Lord of the Shining Ones quailed in abject terror before the calm glance of Gautama that pierced into his very soul and read into the inmost depths thereof. His face grew ghastly pale, and to him, there standing false-hearted and unclean before the soul of the spotless purity, to him, in the borrowed feathers of the one in whose guise he came to perpetrate his foul deed of shame and iniquity, spoke the irate sage, scarcely able to control his fierce wrath.

"Impious wretch ! that host dared to soil my pure abode with this nameless act of wickedness and that in *my* name and in *my* form ! It is but insufficient punishment to thee that thou be deprived of what served you to carry out your nefarious purpose. A man be thou to all appearance, but in reality, the mockery of one—a pitiful eunuch." No sooner were the words out of the lips of the angry Gautama, than the scrota of Indra withered and fell away from his body.

Next, he turned himself to Ahalya, Indra's partner in guilt. "Lie thou here for thousands of years, long and weary, ever hungry, thy food the impalpable air and the grey ashes and dust thy cloak. No mortal eye shall see thee ; but an unquenchable fire shall ever consume thee. At a future age, there shall come across these wastes one Rama, the son of Dasaratha of unapproachable might. *Then* and then alone shall this dread fate fall away from thee; and honoring your Divine guest, thou shalt shake thyself off for ever from these bonds of foul desire and foolish vanity ; *then* shall thy heart know peace and joy ; and *then* shalt thou take thy place by my side in all thy fatal beauty."

He took his bright presence away from the ill-fated One and left this holy place for the pleasant peaks of the

Himalaya, where the Angels of Light ever love to dwell ; and there, in that calm retreat, did he take up his old course of life and its stern duties.

CHAPTER 49. Ahalya and Rama.

Deprived of his vital organs, Indra sought out the gods, and the sages and cried out to them, with his senses all in a whirl through fear. " It was for *yon* that I undertook this dangerous work. You wanted me to somehow or other spoil his Tapas by rousing his anger. And now you perceive the consequences that have followed—myself deprived of virile power and my partner in guilt put away from her husband in anger. But, I have caused him to utter a curse, which has considerably lessened his might and energy acquired by long Tapas. Hence it is but fair and just that you do your duty by me, the instrument of your work and restore to me what I have lost through you."

Then the assembled Devas, the Sages, and the Charanas approached the Fathers and unto them spake Agni, as their spokesman. " Our Lord and Master has imprudently and blinded by passion, ravished the wife of the sage Gautama ; and in return, has been cursed for his pains, which has rendered him an object of pity and scorn, in that he has lost his virile power. Justly does he blame us for it, who set him on this task. You will do well to transfer the scrota of the goat to him ; accept it hereafter as a grateful offering and grant to your votaries the desire of their heart and endless merit besides." The Fathers approved of the suggestion of Agni ; they took counsel among themselves and transferred to Indra the scrota of the goat.

Thenceforth the Fathers have gladly accepted the offering of the goat without its scrota and conferred on the

sacrificers the benefits they had enjoyed hitherto. From that day Indra goes about with the scrota of the goat upon him, thanks to the terrible might of Gautama accruing through stern Tapas. Let us now, Rama dear, approach the sacred precincts of the holy hermitage. To you it is given to release from a living death, as existence of nameless horror, the noble Ahalya, the best and fairest in all the worlds, of gods or men."

Ever obedient to the commands of his master, Rama followed Visvamitra into the hermitage ; and Lakshmana after him. There they beheld the high-souled dame, her natural brilliance but heightened by the long life of penance and meditation through thousands of years. The Gods and Asuras, nay, the denizens of the worlds above and below, could not bear to gaze at the fiery radiance that surrounded her like a halo. The Demiurge had fashioned her the fairest of the daughters of heaven or earth ; and it cost him no little thought and pains ! More like some fair creation of a divine artist in the golden hours of his imagination ; more like the radiant Queen of Night, her glory but dimly veiled by the dewy clouds ; more like the blinding effulgence of the noon-day sun perceived through the watery vapours. There she had stood invisible to the eyes of Mortals and Immortals alike, through the curse launched against her by Gautama ; but now the hour hast struck for her release from her dire fate and lo ! she burst upon the wondering eyes of her visitorss like some sweet vision.

The royal youths hastened to touch her feet in all reverence ; while she, bearing in mind the parting directions of her lord, offered unto them the highest rites of hospitality, which they accepted with a pleased heart. Flowers of divine fragrance fell from on high ; the Gandharvas and the assembled Apsarasas discoursed sweet music, while the heavenly drums and other martial music thundered over

head. "Bravo" cried the celestial hosts "well and nobly done" and paid high worship to the spouse of Gautama, who shone in all her pristine beauty and glory, purified of all stain by long years of stern Tapas.

Then there came unto them from his far-off retreat in the Himalayas the holy Gautama : and the happy pair offered unto Sri Rama divine worship and reverence. Thereafter Gautama resumed his life of calm meditation and holy vows in the company of his wife, now restored to him after countless years of separation and suffering. On his part, the noble Deliverer, honored by the glorious reception accorded to him, took up his march to Mithila in the wake of the Holy One.

CHAPTER 50.

At Mithila.

They proceeded north-east and shortly found themselves near the sacrificial grounds of Janaka. "Reverend Sir" said the princes to Visvamitra "splendid indeed are the arrangements that the great-souled Janaka has made for his sacrifice ; far as the eye can view, lovely cottages to house the sages dot the country, each with its ring-fence of wains. Methinks the Brahmanas from the far corners of the land, masters of the Vedas and its mysteries, have graced the occasion by hundreds and by thousands. Point out to us some convenient spot wherein we too may encamp." And accordingly did Visvamitra pitch their quarters in a place well-watered, calm and removed from noise and bustle.

Janaka was at once informed of their arrival and in humble reverence advanced to welcome them. The Holy Satananda of spotless sanctity led the way, while the

other priests followed the Royal Chaplain with the materials of worship. High reverence and meet did they offer unto the honored guest, who deserved it so well ; Visvamitra accepted it with a pleased heart and enquired of the king his health and of the progress of his sacrificial rite. Janaka rendered proper reply to his holy guest and failed not to assure himself of their welfare and their pleasant journey thither. He then turned to Visvamitra and said to him with joined palms. " May it please your Reverence and your holy brethren to honor me by occupying these seats"; which they did accordingly ; and after them Satananda, the other priests, the King and his ministers.

Having seen to it that all were comfortably seated, Janaka turned to Visvamitra and said. " This day, verily, have the gods been pleased to crown the preparations I have made for this sacrifice. To-day it is that I have realised the object of my holy toil in that I have set my eyes on you. Thrice blessed am I and honored above compare in as much as your Reverence has deigned to grace my sacrificial ground with your saintly presence and not less these ascetics of pure vows. Twelve days more—so say the wise ones—and you will see the Gods come down here to accept their shares of the offerings."

He paused and resumed, his face lit up with the joy within. " Hail to thee ? These youths, who are they ? God-like in their might ; of lordly gait even as the proud monarch of the forests or the majestic elephant or the tiger or the bull ; with large and lustrous eyes, like unto the rosy petals of the blown lotus : combining in themselves the graces of the boy and the youth. Lo ! how they shine in their martial attire, bow in hand, the sword by their sides and the well-filled quivers peeping from behind. More like those heavenly Twins, the ideals of divine grace and beauty, the Aswins. Are these the Gods

themselves, come down of their sweet will to this dull Earth of ours, from their bright home on high ? How chances is it they have deigned to come all the way here on foot ? What seek they ? Whom are they here for ? The Twin Lords of the Day and the Night grace not the sky more than these princes this fortunate land. Face, features, gestures, gait, speech, the keenest eye cannot distinguish the one from the other. These warlike youths, whose sons are they ? These lords of men, why have they trod this wild path and dreadful ? May I know the truth that lies behind this, the visit of these fair-haired boys to my place.”

And to him thus inquiring, did Visvamitra relate the visit of the royal sons of Dasaratha to Siddhasrama, the utter destruction of the Rakshasas at their hands, their stay at Visala on the way, the release of Ahalya from her dreadful fate, their meeting with the holy Gautama, and last, their eager desire to have a sight of the rare bow in his keeping, that led them to fair Mithila. Thus did he recount to the wondering Janaka the details of their remarkable journey and paused.

CHAPTER 51. Visvamitra's visit to Vasishtha.

The words of Visvamitra filled Satananda, the eldest son of Gautama, with supreme delight—the sainted One who shone in the splendour born of long austerities. And great was the wonder with which he gazed at Rama, the boy-hero. He turned his eyes from the princely pair seated there in calm repose and addressed himself to the happy Visvamitra.

“ Mighty One ! you have my thanks unbounded for kindly enabling my mother, of great renown, to bless herself with a sight of Sri Rama, for which long years of penances

and rites severe have prepared her. I have no doubt she offered due hospitality and meet worship to him whom all beings are blessed in honouring. It is a pity that she had nothing better to entertain him with, but the meagre products of the wild woods. I am sure Rama was made acquainted with the details of the unfortunate incident of yore in her life, that cruel Fate had in store for her. Verily, she has been restored to her lord and my sire, in that she has been cleansed of the foul stain that clung to her, thanks to the all-purifying presence of Sri Rama. I hope Rama here was fitly entertained by my sire and rendered back unto him due respect, with a calm heart and restrained self."

To whom replied Visvamitra, waxing eloquent over his favourite theme, "Nothing was slack, nothing went amiss ; it was my care to see that everything ran smooth and to a happy conclusion. Set your heart at rest, holy sir, for, Renuka was not more happily reconciled to Jamadagni, than was Ahalya to your sainted sire."

Satananda drank in the words of the sage with delighted ears and addressing himself to Rama, spoke as follows. "Hail to thee, thou Lord of men, and glad welcome. Fortunate it was that you have been allowed to accompany the holy Visvamitra of invincible might. Wondrous deeds has he wrought through his unparalleled Tapas. Matchless he stands in glory and no mean place holds he among the Brahmarishis. Know him as the last and surest refuge from every ill. Blessed you are in all the worlds, for, it has been given to no other to be watched over and protected by the saintly One who stands conspicuously alone by his stern austerities. Listen to me for a space, while I try to give you a faint idea of the wondrous deeds and might of this scion of the royal race of Kausika.

The Four-faced One had a son by name Kusa . and from him were descended father and son, Kusanabha, Gadhi

and Visvamitra who stands now before us. He was a king, great and powerful and ruled over his vast empire well and wisely for thousands of years. Steadfast was he in virtue and master of all the knowledge of his time ; his heart was ever wedded to the well-being of the countless millions entrusted to his keeping.

One day he took it into his head to make a tour through his vast dominions and the lands around. At the head of his numerous and well-disciplined army, did he pass through flourishing kingdoms and stately towns, across noble rivers and over high mountains, halting at every holy spot and hermitage, until he came to where the saintly Vasishtha abode.

A lovely spot it was, a heaven on earth, Brahma's own celestial seat. Tall trees and stately spread their grateful shade around, under which grazed or played or reposed many a beast of the forest, tame and wild ; meek-eyed fawns ranged about, their natural shyness overcome by the sweet and peaceful ways of the calm-souled ascetics. Siddhas and Charanas, Devas and Danavas, Gandharvas and Kinnaras, frequented the lovely spot, while Brahmarishis, Devarishis and saintly Brahmanas made it their home. There were to be seen bands of hermits of fiery lustre who had perfected themselves in holy Tapas. Some fed on water, some on air, some lived on withered leaves, some on roots and fruits ; but all of restrained senses, of sweet manners. Valakhilyas, too, thronged the place, intent on mystic recitation and devout sacrifices ; while Vaikhanasas made the holy retreat holier still.

Such was the hermitage of Vasishtha and such the sight that met the wondering eyes of the mighty king.

CHAPTER 52.

Vasishtha welcomes Visvamitra.

Right glad was Visvamitra to see the best and foremost of saints, the holy Vasishtha and low bent he at his feet. "Ever welcome" exclaimed Vasishtha and desired him to take his seat. Cheerfully did he entertain his royal guest with roots and fruits and such woodland fare: which accepting, the pleased monarch made respectful enquiries. All was well with himself, his sacred fires, his disciples and his hermitage. And to the royal Visvamitra who sat at his ease, did Vasishtha address himself—the son of Brahma and the foremost of those that lead a life of holy vows and devout meditation.

"How fares it with thee, mighty lord of men? Dost thou rule over thy subjects as becomes a worthy descendant of noble kings and win their hearts with the flawless discharge of thy high duties? Seest thou that thy servants want for nothing? Do they yield ready and willing obedience unto thy commands? Do thy enemies acknowledge thy might and pay thee low homage? Is it all well with thy armies, thy revenues, thy friends, thy kith and kin?"?

"Yea, Holy One, fortune favours me still" modestly replied the royal guest. The hours chased one another with winged feet, as these two, the king and the sage, discoursed on themes high and holy, with mutual delight ever increasing. The discourse came to an end all too-soon, when the reverend host with a pleased smile addressed his noble guest, "Great is my desire to offer unto thy troops and no less unto thy valiant self, the rites of hospitality, as befits thy rank and might. I pray thee to accept it of my hands and deny me not. For, art thou not my liege, my favoured guest, whom I cannot honor enough?

" That have you already done" replied Visvamitra " by your gracious speech, by the offer of such articles as your holy hermitage affords, sweet fruits, roots of the wild and crystal water to wash and drink ; and last, but not the least, thy presence, all-purifying. Honored have I been above my deserts, by the world-honored One. And now, give me kind leave to touch thy feet and depart. May I ever find favour in thy sight and a warm place in thy heart?"

But the noble Vasishtha pressed him again and again to stay and he could not ungraciously refuse. " I obey" replied the proud son of Gadhi " I bow to thy sweet pleasure, thou Holy One".

Then did Vasishtha, the sage of matchless might, call unto him the spotted calf Nandini and say, " Haste thee hither, my sweet one and heed well, Sabala, to what I say. I have it at heart to entertain this pious king and his troops and *that* right royally. Do thou see to it that they have princely fare and sumptuous. None should desire in vain for anything ; be it meat or drink, food or viands of every kind and variety imaginable; sweet, bitter, or acrid, to taste, to sip, to quaff or to eat. No small store, mind thee, but rich abundance and over-flowing; for, man nor god cannot crave for or dream of anything, but thou can'st, in a moment, shower it upon him. This thou wilt do for my sake ; and again I say unto thee, tarry not".

CHAPTER 53.

"Give me the Cow of Plenty."

So directed by Vasishtha, Sabala, the Cow of Plenty, supplied every one with what his heart might desire, juice of the sugarcane, honey, fried rice, Maireya and such like costly liquors, delicious drinks, various kinds of cakes, heaps of hot

cooked rice, curious varieties of deliciously prepared food, soups, Dadhikulyas (rice prepared with milk) and countless plates of silver heaped up with various sweet extracts and pies of six different tastes.

The well-fed troops of Visvamitra, were, if possible, rendered more happy, and cheerful than before—such was the grand repast to which they were treated by Vasishtha. On his part, the royal sage, Visvamitra, was mightily pleased with the magnificent entertainment he received at the hands of his saintly host ; and he spoke to him out of a full heart, that well appreciated the kind attentions shown to himself, his women, his officers, his counsellors, his priests, the Brahmanas in his suite and his numerous retainers.

“Reverend Sir, right royally have I been entertained by you, the World-honored. Allow me, then, learned One, to prefer an humble request of mine. I shall consider myself highly obliged if you will give unto me this Sabala of yours and receive a hundred thousand cows in exchange. She is a gem, the best of her kind; and I need not say that with me is her lawful place ; for, know you not that the best and the rarest products of the Earth belong to the king, of right ? So give her, prithee, unto me”.

To whom, his saintly host and righteous gave calm reply, “Hundreds of thousands of kine, nay, hundreds of crores of them, nor heaps of silver, shall ever induce me to part with my Sabala. Mighty monarch! She *cannot* be removed from my side; as dear *fame* to the high-souled man, Sabala is eternally and inseparably wedded unto me. My offerings unto the Gods and the Fathers, to the sacred Fires, morning and evening, to the various orders of Beings, visible and invisible, my oblations during the full and the new moons, my sacrifices, nay, my daily sustenance, depend solely upon her; the milk that she gives purifies the heart

and the intellect and goes to nourish the vital currents; it endows me with perfect health and serenity and enables me to master the various arts and sciences. Doubt it not; she is all in all to me; my sole source of delight is she and perennial. These and many other reasons besides, stand in the way of my not being able to comply with your request”.

This emphatic refusal of Vasishta heightened but all the more the over-mastering desire of Visvamitra to possess himself anyhow of the coveted Sabala. He waxed eloquent in his offers. “Fourteen thousands of lordly elephants with golden chains, necklets and goads; eight hundred chariots of gold, with sweet-chiming golden bells, drawn by four milk-white steeds; a thousand and ten high-bred steeds from the famed regions of Kambhoja and Bahlika, that trace their pedigree right up to Uchchaisravas and the Gandharvas; one crore of kine, young, healthy and of diverse colours; wilt thou take this and give Sabala unto me? Thou will not? Then, ask of me besides, gold and gems as much as will satisfy thy great heart, even to the utmost and it is thine. Wilt give me Sabala now?”

But Vasishtha spake stern and said “Oh, thou of matchless wisdom! know once for all that Sabala shall never be thine. She is my gems; she is my wealth; she is everything unto me; she is my very life; the new and the full moon offerings, grand sacrifices with untold gifts of wealth, nay every rite lay or religions, all these is she unto me; for, it is to her that these owe their very existence. Doubtest thou? Nay, thou hast my last word upon it—never shall I give unto thee this Granter of Desires. Everything thou offeredest me nor can dream of, can I have of her by a simple wish of mine; why, then, I must be insane to wish to part with her to thee.”

CHAPTER 54.

Sabala fights.

When Visvamitra found that Vasishtha, would on no account part with the 'Cow of Plenty,' he began to drag her away by main force. Whereat, Sabala, sad at heart and burning with grief, said to herself, "What? Has the noble Vasishtha forsaken me quite? Has he delivered me over, sorrow-stricken and afflicted, to the king's attendants to be dragged away? Never have I offended the lofty-minded sage, in thought, in word or indeed; why, then, does he cast me off, innocent, faithful and dear to him—and he the soul of virtue and justice?"

So she thought, while deep sighs shook her frame. All at once she made up her mind and shaking off the menial crowd that laid violent hands on her, as if they were but feathers light, she rushed past them, swifter than wind, on to where her master stood. With sobs and moans, grievous to hear, did she appeal to the saintly Vasishtha; and in tones loud and majestic as of rolling clouds or war-drums huge, spake she forth her tale of woe. "Child of Brahma? Lord! the king's servants drag me away by main force from your side. Is it that you have cast me off?"

To which the saintly One gave sad reply. Convulsed with grief, she stood before him and his own heart was wrung with pity to see her suffering so, dearer to him than a sister. "Know you not, Sabala, that I can never bear to have you away from me even in thought? Know you not that you can never give me any offence, nay, the slightest? I deliver you over into the hands of strangers! Nay, it is but yon king that takes you from me, by main force, against my will. A mighty monarch is he and immeasurably proud of his might. I am no match for him, for, is he not a great warrior, a mighty king? He traces his line through ances-

tors famed for strength of arm and valor of heart ; and above all, he is lord and master of wide lands—with untold millions to do his behests. Lo ! yonder stands his dread hosts, embattled in fierce array and countless as the sands of the ocean—chariots, horses, elephants and infantry,—beneath proud banners and pennons gay. Now, see you not that he is mightier than I ?”

Sabala heard him out and in all humility rendered answer to the wise One. “ Lord ! It needs no saying from me that a warrior’s strength and might is as nought before the radiant energy of a Brahmana ; for, it is not of the earth ; divine in its nature, it has its source from on high. Again I say unto you, a Kshatrya is as chaff before a strong gale, when he pits himself against a Brahmana. Know I not your potent might, that it is utterly immeasurable, inconceivable ? Visvamitra is a warrior bold, it is true : but, what is he before your awful might, before your all-consuming energy. O thou of radiant glory ! speak the word and I, in whom is stored up that terrible Brahmic energy of thine, will, before the eye has time to wink, reduce to ashes yonder vast host that feeds his overweening pride.”

“ Be it so. Bring forth, of thy might, armies that shall scatter to the winds the proud hosts of the king.”

No sooner did his words go forth, than Sabala uttered an awful “Humph”; and close upon it came into view vast hordes of Paplavas, hundreds and thousands of them, and spread dire ruin and confusion among the ranks of the enemy, right before the eyes of the wondering Visvamitra.

But, soon he recovered himself ; and roused to fury at the sight of his splendid army thus cruelly wrecked, he rushed forth upon them in his chariot of gold and with bloodshot eyes of anger, rained arrows and weapons, great and small, upon the opposing Paplavas, till they were laid low, every one of them.

Sabala, observing the sad plight of her warrior brood, brought forth in her wrath, fierce Sakas, Yavanas and Kambhojas. Of superhuman strength and valour and fair as the lovely petals of the bright Champaka, they marched forth in dread array against the foe, while their long swords and gold attire gave back a thousandfold the rays of the sun. They hid the earth from view, so numerous were they; and whereever they fell, the all consuming fire was not crueler. Which perceiving, Visvamitra, in sore straits, hurled upon them his weapons of magical might, until the Yavanas, the Kambhojas, the Paplavas and the Sakas were scattered to the winds.

CHAPTER 55.

Vasishtha and Visvamitra.

Hard pressed by the Astras of Visvamitra, the warriors brought into existence by the magic might of Sabala stood in sore dismay. Whereat Vasishtha turned to the Cow of Plenty and cried, "O thou of infinite potency to create ! bring forth fresh troops through thy Yogic power inherent". At his word Sabala gave forth a mighty grunt and lo ! there stood before her, hosts of Kambhojas radiant as the sun ; from her udders sprang forth Paplavas,—ready armed for fray: Yavanas from her organs of generation ; Sakas from her organs of excretion ; and from every pore on her body rushed forth countless hordes of Mlechchas, Haritas, Kiratas ; and soon, nought remained of the vast armies of Visvamitra, horses, nor chariots, elephants nor soldiers.

The sight stung to fury the hundred sons of the ruler of men and they fell, in a body, upon the solitary Vasishtha, that master of dread spells. "Hum" cried he and there they lay, a heap of ashes, before one can say lo ! They who stood forth a moment ago in the pride of power and the prime o

strength, girt by countless bands of warriors, cavalry and chariots. Thus perished the fated sons of the monarch.

And he, their father, a prey to impotent rage, gnawing shame and sore grief of heart. The mighty ocean stilled of its mountain waves by some potent word of power ; a serpent huge, of her deadly fangs bereft ; the resplendent Orb of Day in the merciless grasp of the eclipse, her blinding lustre suddenly quenched ; or a swift coursing bird shorn of its wings, was not more miserable than Visvamitra, the king, his pride broken, his energy lost and overwhelming grief heavy at his heart, his dear sons and proud army done to destruction before his very eyes and *he* powerless to lift a finger in their defence. But, he resolved to live, if it be to wreak vengeance dire upon his proud foe ; and placing a son of his on the throne, he bade him rule well and wisely, laying to his heart the traditions of his famed ancestors and took his way to the dark slopes of the Himalayas, where Kinnaras fair and Uragas ever love to dwell. By dread austerities and stern vows he sought to propitiate Mahadeva. Long years passed over his head, till one happy day the Lord of Kailasa stood before him on his mighty Bull, gracious of mood and most bountiful.

"These penances severe, why, Lord of men ? Speak thou thy wish and thou shalt have it ; for I am the Giver of Boons and thou hast found favour with me. Speak and hesitate not." Visvamitra bowed himself low in humble reverence before the Radiant Presence and prayed in accents meek. "If it be true that my Lord is pleased with his servant, I crave to be initiated in the science of war in all its branches, down to the minutest details. Reveal unto me its innermost secrets, its potent spells unknown to others. Grant Thou unto me perfect mastery over the magic weapons of the Devas, the Asuras, the Gandharvas, the Yakshas, and the Rakshasas, sages mighty and heroes brave, in the worlds

above or the regions below. All these and more through Thy illimitable grace be mine, whatever I desire." "So be it" assented Mahadeva and vanished from view. And the proud Visvamitra of matchless valour, happy in the possession of mighty weapons human and divine, grew prouder yet : scarce could he contain his swelling energy that grew and grew even as the billowy deep under the stimulating rays of the full moon. The feeble Vasishtha was to him already dead and destroyed or so he thought.

Straight upon the calm solitudes of the peaceful hermitage did he advance and let loose the fires of his wrathful vengeance in weapons of dire might, until a lonely waste was all that remained of the once lovely spot. Its saintly dwellers fled away in affright when the irate king levelled his magic shafts at their calm retreat. Hundreds and thousands of them scattered themselves all over the land, glad to escape the general destruction ; and after them, their numerous disciples—nay, the very beasts of the forest and the fowls of the air followed them in hot haste. A moment ago it was a lovely scene of peace, innocence, gaiety, and calm meditation ; but now—a lonely waste, over which the silence of death hung black and oppressive.

But, Vasishtha, shaken at last out of his philosophical indifference, cried out time and oft, " Fear not, my friends ; him will I annihilate all to nothing, this proud son of Gadhi, even as the morning sun dispels the filmy dews of the night." Then that Master of magic potent, turned to the proud Visvamitra and hissed forth these dread words like winged flame. " Wretched fool ! that laid waste this fair hermitage of mine, the shelter and refuge of many an innocent thing, of many a noble sage, thy cup of iniquity is full and overflowing. Thy hour has come."

He spake and scarce unable to contain his rising wrath, held aloft his magic wand, terrible as the smokeless Fire of Dissolution or as the fearful Rod of Death.

CHAPTER 56.

Brahmana versus Kshatriya.

It required but a spark to kindle the smouldering ire of Visvamitra and madly did he rush at his saintly host. "Stay, stay, thou braggart ! Darest thou to beard the lion in his den and Visvamitra among his troops ? And hopest thou hence unscathed to flee ? ". And he hurled at him the flaming weapon of the God of Fire.

But, Vasishtha, now roused to a pitch of fury at this unwonted return of gratitude, raised aloft his Brahmana staff not unlike the Rod of Death and cried, "Vile wretch of a Kshatriya ! I flee not. Here do I stay to give you a chance to parade your strength, your might and your brand-new weapons. Son of Gadhi ! mark my words. Your haughty spirit shall I quell and not lightly ; and your supreme conceit in the magical weapons you have come by. Pah ! your warrior energy ! It is as the morning mist before the burning rays of the Brahmana might. Fie upon you ! you standing disgrace to thy noble ancestors ! you *will* show off your child's toys before me, will you ? Well, you shall have a taste of my Brahmana might, divine in its nature, mind you".

• He spoke and lo ! the rushing Weapon of the Fire God, terrible to behold, was quenched out of existence, even as a stream of cold water puts out a blazing fire.

Speechless with rage and grief, Visvamitra sped against Vasishtha, that mighty Master of Spells, a continuous stream of magic weapons--the dread darts of Varuna, Rudra, Indra and Pasupati ; the Aishika, the Manava, the Mohana, the Gandharva, the Swapana, the Jrimbhana, the Madana, the Santapana, the Vilapana, the Soshana, Darana ; the invincible Vajra ; the noose of Brahma, of Yama and of Varuna ; the

Pinakastra, dear to Siva ; two bolts, the wet and the dry ; the Dandastra, the Paisachastra, and the Kraunchastra ; the Dharmachakra, Kalachakra Vishnuchakra ; Vayavyastra, Mathanastra, Hayasiras ; two Saktis ; Kankala, Musala, Vidyadharasta, Kalastra, Trisula, Kapala, Kankana. All these and many more did he send forth against the serene Vasishtha ; and indeed it was wonderful to behold, the saintly son of Brahma swallowing them one after another, with but his dread Rod.

Thereafter, when his newly stocked armoury of magic weapons was exhausted, did the royal Visvamitra hold aloft the terrible Brahmastra and hurl it at his invincible foe. The God of Fire and his Fellows, the divine sages, the Gandharvas, the Uragas, and nay, the three worlds, trembled in sore affright and confusion, when they beheld the terrible Brahmastra speeding on its course towards Vasishtha. But he, the sage of restrained self and stern vows, stirred not, nor lifted a finger to ward it off ; for, his mighty Brahmana Staff, charged with the immeasurable energy engendered of untold ages of meditation on the Supreme, absorbed it quite into itself and nought was left of it. Terrible to see was Vasishtha, the mighty One, when he drew into himself that most powerful of weapons ; and all creation stood in dismay thereat. Fearful to conceive was the supernatural brilliance of his form as the intaken energy poured itself out in flashing streams of blinding light, even as tiny sparks from a blazing fire. And his staff was enveloped in sheets of flame, like unto the smokeless Fire of Destruction or the Rod of Time.

Then, the sages on high bent over their clasped hands and prayed in tones of humble entreaty. "Dread Master of Enchantments ! incenseivable is thy might and invincible ; quench thou his all-consuming fire by thy supreme energy. Visvamitra, of mighty Tapas though,

been humbled by thee, and no mistake. Be gracious unto us, thou Master of Magic Potent and give peace and rest unto the trembling worlds."

But, Visvamitra, sore stricken, sighed in impotent rage and baffled might, as if his heart would break. "Fie upon the puny warrior might! The Brahman energy, ah!, that is something to pray for and toil after. What! all my hard-won arms of terrible power baffled by that single staff in the hand of a Brahmana! Now that I have convincing proof enough, I shall uproot love and anger from my heart and with a calm self and serene, set myself upon the path that leads to the coveted eminence of a Brahmana."

CHAPTER 57.

Trisanku.

Visvamitra, out of the great conceit that filled his heart, sought enmity with the all-powerful Vasishtha and fastened a quarrel upon him; and he was amply rewarded for his pains. The memory of his defeat was burnt into his heart in letters of fire and hot sighs broke from it, as fierce flames from the bowels of the earth.

He betook himself to the south and his wife along with him: and there, in the dark solitudes of the forest, did he carry on a course of stern Tapas, wild roots and fruits his only food and his rebellious senses well under restraint. And to him were born sons of righteous lives and straight speech, Havishyanda, Madhushyanda, Dridhanetra and others.

A thousand years passed over his head and at the end of it, Brahma, the Grandsire of the Worlds, stood before him and in accents sweet and mild, addressed the royal ascetic, "Son of Gadhi! thy Tapas has won for thee the

bright regions of the Rajarshis : for, now thou holdest the proud rank of a Rajarshi." He spoke and went back to his glorious seat on high and the attendant Gods along with him.

But, Visvamitra hung his head in sore grief and shame : "A noble return" said he to himself in tones of bitter despondence, " for the dread austerities and stern discipline I passed through. A Rajarshi am I, is it ? So said the Great One and the Gods and the sages confirmed it. I have toiled hard and to no purpose." So, with an undaunted heart and never-flagging energy, did he resume his efforts.

It was about this time there ruled at Ayodhya, a king, by name Trisanku, of the royal line of Ikshwaku. A man of truthful speech was hand self-controlled to a degree : and to him there came a desire to sacrifice to the bright Gods and win a seat in the mansions of the Blessed : and that in the very body he had when on earth. He called unto him Vasishtha, the high-priest of the Ikshwakus and humbly submitted his prayer to him.

" Impossible ;" cried the Holy One, " not that I am unable to conduct such a rite ; nor that such a thing is impossible ; for, do not the Holy Scriptures say, ' He attains the bright Worlds of the Gods, and, that in his body of flesh ' ; but I have looked into the records of your past lives and see I there nothing to ensure the probability of success. Desist from the rash resolve, I lay my orders upon you."

Foiled in the dearest wish of his heart, Trisanku took his way to the south, even where the numerous sons of Vasishtha were engaged in holy Tapas. A glorious sight they presented to the king in their radiant forms of mighty energy latent. The royal petitioner approached them in humble guise, the far-famed sages and laid his proud head

at their holy feet : he stood up before them and bending low over his joined palms, addressed them in pitiful accents, albeit a sense of insulted majesty unconsciously stooped his haughty head. " I take my refuge in you, noble ones ; you are the last and the sole refuge of the helpless. The high-souled Vasishtha has refused me, though I prayed ever so humbly. All glory be unto you. Great is my longing that you perform for me a sacrifice which shall unable me to ascend to the bright Swarga in this present body of mine. Behold I lay my head at your feet in humble entreaty and pray you all, the sons of my Guru, to enable me to realise the desire of my heart. And not less you, holy Brahmanas ! whose whole life is one long prayer and meditation. Bless me out of your noble hearts and assist at this sacrifice on which rest my hopes here and hereafter. Sternly refused by Vasishtha, I see no haven of safety but in the sons of my reverend Master. For, know I not that to the Ikshwakus their High-priest is their God, their surest stay and support ? It has ever been a sacred truth that the high-priest, the Fountain of Power and Wisdom is the shield and the spear of the Kings. And after them, stand you, holy Brahmanas, as my guardian Angels."

CHAPTER 58. The Royal Chandala.

To which lowly request of the royal Trisanku the sons of Vasishtha gave quick reply, winged with wrath. " Evil-minded man ! rejected hast thou been by our Lord Vasishtha, who speaks true ; and darest thou seek any other, passing by so lightly the dread son of Brahma ? The royal Ikshwakus, every one of them, know no other master than their High-priest. And his word once gone forth, the Truth-speaker, they dare not say it nay. The sacrifice he has pronounced

impossible in your case, dare we dream of it? A boy thou art, nay, but a child, though many winters have passed over thy head and blind fortune has made thee king. Seek thou thy home, even as thou came. The Lord Vasishtha alone has the right and the might to conduct any sacrifice, be it to gain the bright spheres above or the dull globes below. And who are we to dare insult his majesty by offering to set about a thing he has once declared impossible?"

But, the king, nothing daunted by the words of winged flame from the lips of his master's sons, spoke in humbler accents still, "Denied have I been by my master Vasishtha and no better treatment have I received at the hands of his sons; what how remains for me but to seek another protector, since you would drive me to it? All good be yours, wealthy beyond count in your holy meditations."

The sons of Vasishtha could not believe their senses. What! a member of the house of Ikshwaku cutting himself away the spiritual ties that bound him, strong as the bands of Fate, to his High-priest, the Lord Vasishtha, the mind-born son of Brahma, eternally wedded unto the royal house, father and son! and seeking the feet of another, even in thought! What madness thus to lay the axe at the root of his House! How utterly black and horrible should be the heart of such a monster! In a fit of uncontrollable fury, they cursed him in words of withering flame. "Wretch! Quit thou that form of Kshatriya and take thou the degraded shape of a Chandala". They spoke and entered their holy abodes, as if to avoid the foul sight of the traitor.

The rosy fingers of Morn drew aside with a deft touch the dark curtains around the bed of the sleeping world as Trisanku, the king of radiant presence, found himself transformed into a vile Chandala. Not a semblance of one, in heart or in nature, but the *very* thing itself. For, each

grade of society is based on the rigid and unswerving discharge of the duties eternally attached thereunto ; and once that a member fails in it, nay, in the slightest, he becomes what he has made himself, consciously and voluntarily. His bright robes flashing with gold and gems, were changed to the dirty black rags of the outcast. The stately form of golden hue, now took on a hideous tint, dark as guilt and more repulsive. His once shining locks, now a tangled mass of wool, short and coarse. Of for-bidding aspect, his shoulders were graced with garlands of flowers that erstwhile lay on the corpses in the crematorium. The ashes of the dead covered his limbs and took the place of the delicate-scented sandal paste and the rare perfumes. An unsightly strip of leather, lay on the broad and massive chest, where once gleamed the Sacred Thread of gold, the badge of the Twice-born. And curious ornaments of black iron but added to the horror of the degradation. His ministers and councillors fled away in affright from him, the outcast Chandala ; and the loyal citizens followed at their heels. But, he, the proud monarch a day before, wended his weary way all alone. The cruel talons of Shame and Anger dug at the root of his heart ; but Titan-like, undaunted yet he stood and unconquerable. Visvamitra was the man he approached ; Visvamitra, the deadliest foe of Vasishtha, who had said him nay, whose sons had launched their terrible curse upon him ; even Visvamitra of fiery will and terrible energy.

Visvamitra cast his eyes on the proud scion of the royal race of Ikshwaku, whose hopes here and hereafter were shattered to nothing by his mortal enemy Vasishtha and his sons. Grief-stricken pity filled his heart to see the Ruler of men approaching him in the despised guise of a Chandala ; and out of that great pity did the righteous sage of dazzling lustre address the Lord of Ayodhya, now no gentle sight. "Hail to thee ! and all good. What brings thee here ? The

son of a king thou, of invincible might, hast thou fallen on evil days ? Ruler of the stately Ayodhya ! How hast thou come to be cursed to become a Chandala."

To which kind enquiry of his brother monarch, did Trisanku, Chandala against his will, render meek reply. "Spurned have I been" cried he over his folded palms, "by my Guru Vasishtha and his sons. What I sought them for I have not got ; but, what I never bargained for, what I could never deserve, nay, what I would flee away from, that, have I received at their hands and in no small measure. Strong is the desire of my heart to ascend to the homes of the Shining Ones, in this mortal frame of mine. Sacrifices innumerable have I performed, but I am no whit nearer the realization of my hopes. Nor have I given utterance to an untruth, nor will hereafter. So, I cannot, for a moment, believe that any breach of truth on my part has nullified the effects of my sacrifices. I am now in the coils of Adversity ; but I swear to you on the honour of a Kshatriya that I speak the bare truth. Never have I failed in the regular and conscientious discharge of my daily duties--sacrifices to the Gods, to the Fathers, and to the various orders of Beigns ; just and wise government of my people ; humble service to my spiritual guides and other high-souled Ones, meet and acceptable. Ever do I seek to walk in the straight and narrow path of Right and Duty : but my teachers look not with favour upon me when I prayed them to conduct for me a rite to gain me a seat among the Gods. Verily do I think that Fate has the last word in our affairs and free will and individual effort are but as light grains of dust before it. Fate rules supreme over everything. Fate is the sole and last Arbitrator of joy and sorrow, good and bad. It behoves you to stretch out to me the hand of help, a wretch whom the Wheel of Fortune has flung lower than the lowest and whose turn .

he awaits with an eager heart. May your glory never grow less. Cruel Fate inexorable has pierced my shield, shattered my spear and beat me down to my very knees. I have reached the end of my resources ; I throw myself on your limitless compassion and pray to sit under the shadow of your might. No other Protector shall I seek, for Protector have I none. To your holy feet do I cling and will not quit them even though the mighty Vasishtha should pray it of me to go back unto him. Utmost confidence have I, nay, it is a certainty with me that you and you alone can, if you will, lightly set aside strong Fate and make it powerless."

CHAPTER 59.

Visvamitra Champions Trisanku.

Whereupon, unto the noble king, condemned by a frightful doom to drag out his miserable existence as a vile outcast, Visvamitra replied in words of liquid melody that welled from a heart overflowing with pity. " Welcome, proud member of a noble race ! you are not, my son, unknown to me as an exceedingly righteous king and pious. Fear not, noble lord ! for from this moment you sit under the shadow of my shield and my sword is at the breast of your enemies. I will lose no time in sending for such as can help me in this sacrifice of mine, wise sages and saintly ascetics. And one they are here, you will, with a heart relieved of care, be enabled to begin it. Born Chandala you are not : were it so, this curse, pronounced by your Guru, would be hard for the Self-born One to set aside. So, shall you in this body of thine ascend to the bright heavens, and all through the power of my Tapas. I see the gates of heaven open wide to welcome their honoured guest : methinks I see you take your proud seat among the Gods ; for have you not

asked for and obtained refuge with Visvamitra, son of Gadhi, the Champion of the Weak and the Oppressed?"

He spake, the proud sage of matchless glory and directed his sons righteous and wise, to get everything ready towards the sacrifice. Next he sent for his disciples and said to them, "Speed ye far and near and invite hither the Wise Ones of the Earth, their pupils, their friends, as also the sacrificial priests and those who have drunk deep of the words of Wisdom. If any but breathe a word of dissent, nay, so much as dare slight me, saying, 'Lo! here is a Kshatriya has taken it upon himself to sacrifice for a Chandala, you will not omit to bring it to my ears.'

They heard and obeyed his behests. On the wings of speed they flew and brought him back word of what transpired. "Lord of dazzling lustre!" cried the students of the Sacred Lore, "the wise sages of the earth, everyone of them, have heard thy message and are even now on their way here, all except Mahodaya and the sons of Vasishtha. Nay, dread Lord, the latter had the matchless impudence to say in tones of concentrated wrath, 'Strange days are come over us and strange things happen. Wonder of wonders! A Kshatriya has the audacity to assume the sacred functions of a sacrificial priest and *that* for a degraded Chandala! Have the noble Brahmanas become so scarce that a warrior should pose himself as such? Have the Twice-born disappeared, from the bosom of the earth, that a Chandala should dare to allow a sacrifice to be conducted for his benefit? A nice pair this, a fighting priest, and the outcast sacrificer! A strange sight will it be to see the holy sages and the radiant Gods sit down in the hall, to partake of the offerings! And the high-souled Brahmanas, how do they hope to ascend to the mansions of the Shining Ones, defiled beyond hope by having partaken of food at the hands of the Chandala? And the

sages of the holy vows, how dare they have assisted at the celebration of such a sacrilegeous rite, though they have the mighty Visvamitra to back them'. Such were the words of wanton insult uttered by Mahodaya and the numerous sons of Vasishtha, their eyes flashing fire."

Visvamitra heard them and fierce flames shot out of his eyes ; while the burning wrath in his heart found vent in words of doom. " And so, the impious wretches dared to say this about me, pure and spotless, engaged in dread austerities. Well, they may decry me, for they know not that nothing can stand before the all-consuming energy of my Tapas, nay, not even the so-called sacrilege of sacrificing for a Chandala. Well, here is the reward for their pains. Nothing shall remain of them but a heap of ashes. Fell Time shall cast his noose over their necks and hale them even to the gates of the Lord of Death ; and that this very moment. Nay, more is yet to come ; for, my anger shall pursue them even beyond the portals of Life and Death. For lives seven hundred, shall they drag on a miserable existence, foul eaters of the decaying corpse and dogs' meat. Pitiless of heart, they shall go under the name of Mushtikas and shall range the worlds, uncouth of form, speech and habits. As for Mahodaya, who, in his mad folly reviled me, the stainless, he shall, of a truth, be a degraded Nishada. Ever intent upon murder and violence, with a heart knowing no shadow of pity, he shall, for ages untold, suffer a life of misery and my anger shall chain him thereto."

So spake Visvamitra, the sage of stern vows, while calm-souled ascetics heard him with well-concealed expressions of sorrow and disapproval.

CHAPTER 60.

The Triumph of Visvamitra.

Having thus annihilated, by the might of his Tapas, Mahodaya and the sons of Vasishtha, Visvamitra turned to the assembled sages and said "Behold this scion of the royal race of Ikshwaku, known to men as Trisanku. Firm are his feet on the path of Righteousness and he is a great Giver of gifts; above all, he has sought refuge with me. For, great is his desire to ascend to the worlds of the Gods in his body of flesh. You and I will so conduct a sacrifice for him that he may go away from amongst us, his heart yearnings gratified to the full."

The sages heard him out and took council among themselves. "This our host, the sage Visvamitra, the proud descendant of the Kusikas, is a very Fountain of Wrath. We must do even as he says: else he will verily consume us with his curses. Far be it from us, then, to do anything that might draw his lightning upon us. Now, let us lose no time in commencing the sacrifice, which shall, thanks to the immeasurable might of Visvamitra, raise Trisanku aloft to the seat of the Gods, even in his earthly body. Betake we each to our respective duties."

And so the long-delayed sacrifice commenced, under no very favourable auspices, Visvamitra assuming himself the responsible post of the Adhwaryu, while his brother sages went about their duties without a fault, without a hitch, as ordained by the Book of Rules.

Then, in due course, did Visvamitra of dread puissance, call upon the Shining Ones to come down to the sacrifice and receive their shares of the offerings—Once, twice, thrice. But, the Lords of Light came not, though invoked time and oft. "What sacrifice is this, in which a *Kshatriya*, all

unqualified, sacrifices for a wretch, cursed by the Lord Vasishtha to be a foul Chandala : and shall we, even respond to the unholy call and defile ourselves for all time, by partaking of the offerings therein ?”

A storm of wrath shook the proud frame of Visvamitra ; and raising aloft the sacrificial ladle, did he cry in a terrible voice, “Trisanku ! my son, let be this rite on which you rest your hopes. Behold what my hard-earned Tapas can do. I shall, out of my innate energy, raise you to the skies, even where the haughty Gods have their abode, and that in this very body you now wear. No easy task for others, see you. There yet remains to me unexpended some of the might which I have acquired by long austerities, stern and holy ; and by the force of *that*, ascend, Trisanku, to the bright homes of the Angels of Light in this very body of yours.”

No sooner were the words out of his mouth, than the sages assembled beheld a wonderful sight, nay a miracle, and Trisanku rose aloft from this dull Earth right up towards the radiant worlds of the Celestials, in the dark and degraded form of the Chandala.

But, Indra, the Lord of the Immortals, saw him, the unworthy one, advancing to take his place among them ; and voicing the unspoken resolve of the Gods, “ Back, back, Trisanku,” cried he “ sooner than you came. You have no place here among us. Fool that you are ! see you not the black curse of your Guru dragging you down ? Fall thou headlong upon the patient bosom of Mother Earth, who groans beneath the weight of your sin.” And Trisanku, hurled head downwards from the High Heavens, cried out in heart-rending tones of agonised entreaty, “ Save me, Oh save me, my Lord Visvamitra, my only saviour.”

The cry pierced him to the heart and roused him to a pitch of ungovernable fury. “ Stay where thou art ; stay,

I command thee " cried he. And Trisanku stood in mid-air as if petrified.

Then, seated as he was in the midst of his fellow-sages, did he, like another Brahma, proceed to evolve a new creation. " Lo ! my Trisanku shall be the Pole-star of my new system. Another constellation of the Seven Rishis (Ursa Major), shall revolve around him : and beyond these, another circle of lunar asterisms." He spoke ; and in the south, there rose a grand system of worlds, the counterpart of that in the north. But his rage would not stop there and he continued. " My new world, it shall have another Indra over it : but, stay, methinks it were better without one (the very name is hateful to me). Why, Trisanku, my son, shall be its Lord,--and shall outshine that wretch of an Indra who dared to stand against my will." And forthwith, he set about to fashion another creation of the various Celestial Hierarchies.

Then, mighty fear seized the hearts of the Gods, the Asuras, and the sages at this undreamt of and awful display of power, almost divine : and with humble entreaties and low, they approached the irate sage, at their wits' end almost, how to accomplish the hopeless task of charming his wounded pride with words. " Mighty One ! This king, your protege, is not entitled to a place among us. Our bright worlds are for such of the Twice-born as are unsullied and pure : whereas, Trisanku, holy as he is, lives under the inexorable curse of his Guru, the all-powerful Vasishtha. And who knows it better than you ? "

Now, Visvamitra's heart was glad and his anger pacified some-what : for, were not the proud Gods at his feet, who, a little while ago, had the temerity to brave his anger and would not come when called ? But, his iron will would not yield, nay, not so much as a hair-breadth. " Peace be unto you !" cried he, (and this was the only sign he gave of any reconciliation towards his haughty foes,) " my word has passed to Trisanku

the king here, that he *shall*, in this body *of* his ascend to your worlds ; and it shall never prove otherwise. Since you *will* not receive him of your own accord, I have no other god than make my word good anyhow, by methods not very pleasant to you. Where Trisanku now is, there shall be a world of the Gods : and the stars and constellations-created by me, as also the orders of Heavenly Powers, shall continue to exist, to the day of the Great Dissolution. May I hope that you will accord, out of your pleasure, your consent to this arrangement, to which perforce I am driven by dire necessity ?”

What could they do, the Gods, foiled by the terrible might of Visvamitra ? They made the best of a bad bargain and gave in with a good grace. “It shall be even as you desire. Your stars, your constellations and the various orders of Celestial Beings, shall endure for ever, even as the existing solar system, but outside the Vaisvanara path (the Zodiac). These shall ever revolve round the fortunate Trisanku, radiant as the Gods and as happy as they—but he shall hang head downwards, as a living reminder of the awful sacrilege of setting aside the words of the spiritual teacher. In other respects his fame shall illuminate all the worlds, as falls to the lot of no mortal.”

“Be it so,” Visvamitra gave glad assent, while the Gods and the sages assembled, lauded to the skies the righteous sage of superhuman power.

The sacrifice was completed ; (Visvamitra placed another person in Trisanku’s stead ;—and *this time*, the Gods failed not to come down and partake of the offerings) ; the Shining Ones and the sages of high spiritual fervour departed to their respective abodes, well-pleased.

CHAPTER 61.

Ambarisha.

Visvamitra saw them depart, the holy sages and addressed himself to the dwellers of that forest. "The southern quarter where now we are is not favourable to our purpose ; let us proceed to the west and continue our Tapas there ; for, a mighty check has been placed upon us here. The forests of Pushkara will, I am sure, prove more congenial to our quest ; for, as a holy spot it has no equal." So he repaired to the groves of Pushkara and resumed his severe austerities, supporting himself solely upon fruits and roots.

It was about this time that Ambarisha, the ruler of Ayodhya, set about to perform a grand sacrificial rite, during which Indra made away with the consecrated horse. The high priest turned to the king and said: "Lost is the consecrated animal and all through your carelessness. Heedless acts such as these never fail to bring ruin on the head of the ruler who fails to protect his charge. But, the mistake can be repaired if you can bring back the animal or a man to take its place. Delay not, but see that you do it before the sacrifice is over."

With a heavy heart did Ambarisha seek far and wide and offered thousands of kine to any one who would give him a man to sacrifice. Towns and cities, hamlets and groves, forests and peaceful hermitages and distant lands, he omitted none. But vain was his quest, until at last he came to Bhrigutunda, where lived, in his calm retreat, Richika, with his wife and sons. Him the royal sage approached, of boundless glory and reverence paid, proffered his request to the pleased Māharishi, radiant in the might of his Tapas. "Hail to thee, Holy One ! is it well with thee and thy peaceful round of religious duties ? Come

hither have I, to beg of you one of your sons for a sacrificial offering ; thousands of kine shall be thine if thou but fulfil my purpose and bring peace to my tortured heart. Far have I roamed and humbly sought for anyone who would consent to furnish me with a sacrificial victim, and my last hope rests in thee. Take whatever price thou wilt, but give me one of thy sons." And to him replied the sage of radiant presence, " Never shall I part with my first-born, no, not for any consideration."

" Then spoke to the king the mother of the boys. " My lord of the line of Bhrigu has passed his word that the eldest son of his loins shall never be sold to another ; but, ruler of countless millions ! dearer unto me is my youngest, Sunaka so named. Him shall I never consent to give away, for, know you not that a father's hopes are ever centered in his eldest boy, while the youngest born twines himself round the heart of her that gave him birth ? Now, do you blame me for standing between death and him whom I have best ?"

Sunassepha, the mid-most of the three, listened to the words of his parents, and, with a firm heart said to the king, " He that came unto the world before me is dear unto my saintly father ; he who saw the light after me is no less so unto my mother. Sold they shall not be, my parents would have it so. Then, it goes without saying that, he who remains is welcome to be taken by thee. Lead me, O, king ! where thou wilt."

Sunassepha, of matchless wisdom having thus sold himself unto the king, Ambarisha, his heart dancing with joy, loaded the sage with rich gifts and costly, silver and gold, gems and precious stones of countless value and hundreds of thousands of cattle. He took respectfully leave of the saintly pair and placing the hard-won Sunassepha

on his royal car, wended his way back to where stands the lordly Ayodhya.

CHAPTER 62.

VISVAMITRA SAVES SUNASSEPHA.

It was the height of noon when the monarch unyoked his weary steeds to take a short rest on the banks of lake Pushkara.

But, Sunassepha, wandering aimlessly over the place with a heavy heart, chanced to come upon Visvamitra, his mother's brother, engaged with many a hermit in stern austerities. Faint with toil and thirst, he ran up with a woeful countenance to where sat Visvamitra and falling upon his breast, cried to him in pitious accents.

" Father have I none, nor fondling mother nor kith nor kin. Thou art my refuge and stay and thee do I call upon in the name of sweet compassion to save me from this dreadful fate. Thou art ever the champion of the oppressed : thou art ever a shield between the wretched and their misery. Find thou a way by which the king shall achieve his object and myself spend long years of holy austerities on this earth and win the abode of the Gods at the end. Protect me, for protector have I none, out of thy tender heart and sweet pity ; be thou a father unto me and chase away this horrible danger that hangs over my head".

Visvamitra, of boundless might, calmed the wild grief of the boy and infused hope into his despairing heart. Turning to his sons, " Now is the time come" said he " for you to show that a father brings forth from his loins sons like unto himself, to secure him good on earth and lead him to the bright regions on high. This boy whom you see here, the

son of a hermit, clasps my feet in humble appeal for protection. Save his life and bring joy and peace unto his broken heart. Everyone of you has kept the observances, not one of you that has ever swerved from the path of Right and Duty. Take you his place at the sacrifice of Ambarisha and may the bright God of Fire find in you a sweet offering. Sunassepha shall be saved from death ; the sacrifice shall come to a happy end : the gods shall depart well pleased ; and my word to the orphan-boy shall have been well kept."

Loud laughed they in scorn, his sons, Madhusyanda and the rest ; and spoke back unto their father out of a proud heart and haughty spirit. "A fine father it is, that puts a stranger's brat before his own flesh and blood. The very idea is repulsive to us, even as dog's meat for dinner."

Fire flashed from the eyes of the angry father and in a terrible voice he cried out. "Dare ye speak to me such words as these, heartless, blood-curdling, shameless. Dare ye set my commands at defiance and outrage Duty and Justice. Wanderers over the earth shall ye be, everyone, for a thousand years, your only food the dog's meat you so abhorred, even as the sons of my hated rival Vasishtha." So cursed he in mighty wrath his sons rebellious ; and turning himself to the despairing Sunassepha, he performed certain protective rites to ensure his safety at the dreadful moment. "Fair son, when to the sacrificial stake of Vishnu bound, a helpless victim you stand, fail not to call upon the bright God of Fire in that hour of heed. Two spells I give you, of potent might, with which you shall win the grace of Indra and Vishnu. When the bands of holy grass are tight around you, the red sandal paste on your limbs and the blood-red garland round your doomed neck, chant you these hymns of unspeakable power in the sacrificial hall of the royal Ambarisha and you will come by no harm."

Sunassepha humbly received the potent charms and with a joyful heart hastened to his royal master and said, " Mighty king, we have tarried too long on the way. Proceed we to the place of sacrifice and delay not to take upon yourself the initiatory vow."

Soon they were at Ayodhya ; and Ambarisha, now all joy, caused Sunassepha, the voluntary victim, to be bound to the sacrificial stake ; the withes of the sacred Kusa encircled his graceful limbs ; and his garments of fiery red but enhanced the horror of the scene. The holy priests directed him therein and saw that nothing went amiss. The supreme moment came that was to decide his fate ; when, lo ! there rung forth, from the helpless victim bound, words of wondrous might, praising high the great Indra and his greater brother Vishnu ; and it was even as his wise master had taught him. The thousand-eyed Lord was surprised and pleased ; for, the mysterious words of praise were known to no sons of earth. Long years of happy life were the meed of him that won the heart of the Lord of the Angels. Ambarisha too came in for his share of the hard-won grace of the mighty One, in that the high merit of the holy rite was his, a thousandfold increased thereby.

All the while, Visvamitra, the Heaven-sent protector of the orphan-boy, went on with his stern Tapas at the holy Pushkara and mortal years twice five hundred did he count.

CHAPTER 63.

Visvamitra and the Siren.

It was over, the long and severe Tapas, and unto Visvamitra, fresh from his bath, came the Immortals, every one of them, desirous that he should reap the fruits of his long and arduous labours. Then spake the Four-faced One, his

divine glory brightening the bright space around, "Hail to thee!" so rang the accents sweet, "A Rishi art thou and right well dost thou deserve the rank thy holy Tapas has gained for thee"; and with that he went back to his bright world. But Visvamitra's heart was heavy yet and he resumed his untiring labours.

The long years passed over his patient head and one fine day an Apsaras, Menaka by name, came to the rolling waters of Pushkara to lave her shapely limbs in its cool depths. Her he saw, the ascetic of stern vows, blazing in his energy; she was a dream of beauty, even as the lambent lightning playing through dark clouds surcharged with rain. The bright god of Love, that mischievous boy, was at hand and from his magic bow shot forth his straightest shaft and mightiest, right at the heart of the sage of iron will; and, as if in response, there burst forth, all unknown to himself, the heart-cry of burning passion, fierce, consuming and not to be denied.

"Welcome, thrice welcome, thou fairest maid in heaven or earth! Dwell thou with me and be my love. Faint am I with passion and of my wits rest; let me but look into the dark depths of thine eyes and lose myself in a dream of bliss."

"As my lord willeth" replied the bashful one; and dwelt with him in that peaceful retreat, a fatal check to his mighty Tapas.

Bright summers five and five flew over the heads of the happy pair, in a sweet dream of blissful love; and Visvamitra woke up from it one woeful day, pitiful shame in his looks and dull grief gnawing at his heart. All at once a light broke upon his brain and he cried out in anguish, "Fool that I was, not to see that this was a snare set to entrap my unwary feet, by those relentless foes of mine, the

Devas. What !! twice five years by mortal count and to my blinded eyes it seemed but a day and a night ! I have to thank myself and my blind passion for this cursed obstacle that has nipped my hopes in the bud."

Burning sighs broke from his noble heart and cruel repentance dug its brazen claws therein.. Looking up, he saw her before him, the unwilling partner of his ruin, the golden-hued Menaka, trembling in affright, her flower-soft hands raised to him in mute appeal for pardon. The sight filled his heart with sweet pity with gentle words and sad, he sent away the witching siren, all too glad to escape so lightly.

Then he set his face to the north and took his weary way to the great mountains, even where the bright Kausiki gladdens the earth ; and having made a mighty resolve to win or die in the attempt, he engaged himself in a long course of stern observances.

A thousand years went by and the bright gods quaked in awe to see him there, grim and stern, his heart still set on his mighty quest. Swift coursed they and the holy sages along with them, to the Heavens of Brahma. "Let this terrible man be pacified" they implored "with the gift of the high rank of a Maharshi."

" Be it so ", rejoined the great Father and he took himself to where sat that Tapas incarnate. " Fair son," so came forth the accents sweet, " All hail ! a Maharshi thou ! Well pleased am I with thy intense Tapas and willingly do I confer on thee the highest rank among the sages of the earth."

But, Visvamitra, his calm heart in no way ruffled with grief or joy, returned answer meet to the Omnipotent One. " Then am I " cried he, with hands of joined prayer the while, " beyond all doubt, the proud controller of the rebellious senses, in as much my lord has deigned to speak

of me as having won, by holy deeds all mine own, the high pre-eminence of a Maharshi."

"Not yet" broke in Brahma "not yet thine, the undisputed sway over the fleeting senses. Long lies the road before thee and steep, ere thou attain that dizzy eminence. Toil on, brave one". And forthwith he went back to his seat of bliss.

Visvamitra saw them depart, the gods hard to please, and began anew, with unflagging zeal, his Tapas sterner far and fiercer. With arms raised above his head on high, stood he there without a prop, the viewless air his only food. The burning heat of summer played on his devoted head, while fierce fires, four in number, blazed around his wasted frame. The dark clouds, heavy-charged, poured on his defenceless head their ceaseless stream of arrows straight. The chill months, day and night, found him there, deep immersed in freezing waters ; and so during those long years of weary toil.

Mighty fear took relentless hold of Indra and his celestial host, as they viewed with awe and wonder the royal sage pursuing his end with grim tenacity and a dauntless heart. Then summoned Indra unto his presence, Rambha, the fairest of the daughters of Heaven and the wiliest ; and in council full, unfolded unto her a plan, their ends to achieve and foil the determined efforts of the dread Aspirer.

CHAPTER 64.

Visvamitra and Rambha.

"Rambha ! you are to render the celestials a great service; beguile Visvamitra and inspire desire and delusion of heart in him."

So said Indra of mighty intellect ; and Rambha, joining her palms, replied to him shyly, " Lord of the Shining Ones ! this great sage Visvamitra is a terrible man to approach ; of a certainty he will let loose his wrath upon me, frightful to bear. That is why I am afraid to go ; and you will take pity on my poor self and excuse me from the task."

Indra calmed the trembling one, who raised her hands and eyes to him in sweet appeal. " Fear not, Rambha ; perform my behests and you shall come to no harm. I will stay with you ; and the koil with heart-ravishing notes, the spring in the pride of his bloom and luxuriance and not the least, the God of Love himself shall be your assistants in your difficult task. Assume a dazzling form in which all your charms shall be displayed and lure away his heart from his austerities."

And following his directions, Rambha, the loveliest of the lovely Apsarasas, excelled herself, if possible and with radiant smiles and alluring glances, set about to shake the equanimity of the fiery ascetic.

The sweet strains of the Koil fell on his ears and raising his eyes, he saw, with a pleased heart, the witching Siren. The delicious music of her voice, the no less sweet notes of the Koil, and her all-compelling beauty roused strange feelings in his heart, inexpressible joy, but with a dash of suspicion in it. He was not long in finding out that it was a ruse of Indra to shake his high resolve (Indra, his relentless enemy, was at his old dirty tricks again). His anger blazed forth and a terrible curse shot out from his lips.

" Thou wicked wench ! seekest thou to draw me away from my pious meditations, who have set his heart on subduing desire and hate ? Twice five thousand winters shall thou drag a miserable existence, a block of stone, a living

corpse. And so shalt thou remain, a fitting victim of my just wrath, until a Brahmana of high spiritual might and radiant presence shall raise thee from the depths of misery."

So spake the great sage and paused; for his heart was sad and sore and he had not yet learned to hold in check his rising anger. But the dire curse came upon Rambha then and there and turned her divine beauty into shapeless stone. Her affrighted helpers, Love and Spring, vanished into thin air at the first blast of the tempestuous wrath.

His terrible outburst of temper robbed him of his hard-earned spiritual power and he ate his heart away at having failed to curb his passions. He raised his hands aloft and uttered a mighty vow. "Never again shall I give way unto this accursed wrath; never again shall word of mine pass these lips; nay, I will hold in my breath, even if it be for hundreds and thousands of years. I will trample down my rebellious senses and dry up this withered body until I attain through the force of my austerities, the coveted rank of a Brahmana. I will remain without any sustenance and with suppressed breath for endless years and my life-currents shall not waste away when I am absorbed in Tapas." With an undaunted spirit, did he set himself to carry out this terrible vow, unheard of before among men, and entered upon his dreadful task.

CHAPTER 65.

Visvamitra, the Brahmārshi.

Thereafter the great sage left the slopes of the Himalaya for its western parts and renewed his dread Tapas. Of a truth, it was unparalleled in the annals of men and seemed almost an impossible task—his vow of absolute silence for a thousand years. When the long

period drew to a close, Visvamitra had become as impervious to external sensations as any block of wood or stone. Countless were the obstacles thrown in his path by the ever watchful gods, but Anger failed to find a way into his heart. Terrible was the vow he made and right manfully did he keep it.

The thousand years are past and the man of iron will sits down to break his long fast ; when, Indra comes unto him as a Brahmana and asks to be fed. At once the sage of mighty vows offers him the ready food with all reverence : and true to his vow of silence, he speaks not a word to the Brahmana, who ate what Visvamitra was about to sit down to after long years of fasting.

Another thousand years did he carry on his Tapas, more terrible, if possible, in that he breathed not. His life breaths restrained within his frame, thick clouds of smoke began to issue from the crown of his head and lighted up the three worlds, stupefying the beings therein. Distracted through the overpowering energy of the sage, deprived of their natural brilliance by his awful Tapas and rendered dull and heavy, Gods and Asuras, Gandharvas Pannagas and Rakshasas sought the presence of the Lotus-born One and lifted unto him hands of despair and woe-begone countenances.

" We are at our wit's end, having exhausted all our arts to beguile the terrible Visvamitra or to rouse him to anger ; but, alas ! our anxious labors do but render the progress of his Tapas the more rapid. Search as we would, we could not find the least flaw in him ; nay, not the slightest, not the subtlest. Deny him the desire of his heart and he will, through the worlds, send dire ruin and destroy every object of creation therein. The quarters, behold ! are dull and dark : the ocean waves toss their rebellious crests on high ; the mighty hills are rent in twain ; the earth trembles in affright and the wind blows in sullen gusts. Lord on high !

our eyes see not beyond the present ; men turn scoffers of the Almighty and of His Law of Right. The worlds stand in dull despair, relieved by fits of anxious care. The bright sun is but a dark cloud before the fiery radiance of the sage. Hasten thou to soften the heart of Visvamitra, ere he sets his mind upon reducing the whole creation to nothing through the fire of his Tapas. Grant him anything he asks, be it the empire of the Gods on high."

Brahma placed himself at the head of the low-spirited Gods and proceeding to where the great-souled Visvamitra was engaged in his stern Tapas, addressed him in accents sweet and soothing. "Hail ! Brahmarsi ! is it all well with thee ? Thy austere Tapas has won our grace and has placed thee in the forefront of the twice-born ones. Take thou from me the happy boon of long life, which the assembled Gods are only too glad to confirm. All good be thine, thou holy One ! Free thou art, to turn thy steps wherever it may list thee."

The words of the Self-born One and the attendant gods fell sweet on the hungry ears of the sage of terrible vows ; and with a glad heart and joined palms, did he hasten to reply, "If granted I am the proud status of a Brahmana and length of years beyond mortals, let Omkara, Vashat-kara and the Vedas be fruitful in me even as they are among the regenerate ones. Let Vasishtha, the mind-born son of Brahma, recognise me as such, for he stands peerless among those who are proficient in the Vedas that regulate the lives of the Brahmanas and Kshatrias. Let the bright Immortals here give their assent thereunto. Accomplish this, the dearest wish of my heart and go where you like."

Thereat, the Shining Ones approached Vasishtha and besought the Brahmarsi to make friends with his brother sage.

"Be it even so" replied he, and acknowledged Visvamitra as his equal. "A Brahmarshi art thou and no doubt of it. Everything shalt thou achieve as promised by the divine Ones." And the delighted Gods went back unto their abodes.

Thereupon Visvamitra, having achieved the goal of his long and severe efforts and raised himself to the rank of a Brahmana, rendered affectionate reverence unto Vasishtha of mighty spells. And ever afterwards, he wandered over the Earth, engaged in holy Tapas.

It was thus, Rama dear, that the high-souled One won the rank of a Brahmana, impossible to attain. And here he stands, the best and foremost of sages. In him you see Tapas incarnate. Ever wedded is he unto Right. He is the highest ideal of human valour and prowess" So spake Satananda, of radiant presence, while Janaka and the princely youths drank in the tale with eager ears.

Then the monarch turned to the mighty descendant of Kusika and spoke overjoined palms of reverence. "High shines my star and thrice blessed am I, in that thy august self has deigned to be present at this my sacrifice along with the royal youths of the line of Ikshwaku. Best of saints ! Envyed of men ! all pure is my soul and free of stain, for I have set my eyes on thee to-day ; nay, I stand enriched by many an undreamt grace of heart and mind thereby. Fortunate am I and Rama too, of noble heart, in that it was given us to listen to the holy recital of thy high ascetic deeds. Now is it that we have some idea, though a faint one, of thy rare excellences and great worth. Thy Tapas is something inconceivable, thy might and thy graces of the head and the heart. Why, an easier task were it to seek to fathom the nature and greatness of the Self-born One or of the Lord of the Mountain Queen. Never can I hear enough of thy

marvellous deeds ; but, lo ! the envious sun hangs low in the West and calls us to the evening prayers. - May I pray thee to honour me with thy sacred presence here, the earliest hour to-morrow ? All glory be thine, thou best of ascetics! I hope I have thy leave to withdraw."

To which the holy One returned meet answer, praising high the noble king, and gladly gave him leave to retire. Thereupon, Janaka and his kin reverently went round the World-honoured One, Satananda leading them on. Visvamitra then left for his quarters, while the assembled sages rose to do him glad reverence ; and Rama and his brother followed in his wake.

CHAPTER 66.

The Coming of Sita.

Brightly smiled the morn, when, his daily worship over, Janaka requested the presence of Visvamitra and his princely disciples. Having offered unto them due welcome and respect, even as the Holy Books lay it down, he addressed himself to Visvamitra and said " Your Reverence ! what behest of thine shall I hasten to obey ? For, ever thine humble servant am I, to dispose of me as thou wilt."

And to him the eloquent sage made meek reply: "These royal youths, of wide-spread fame, are the bright sons of Dasaratha, Lord of Ayodhya ; they desire to have a sight of the bow that is in thy keeping. Place it before them and let them depart hence, the desire of their hearts gratified."

" Be pleased, wise One !" rejoined Janaka, " to listen to me, while I narrate to you how that wonderful bow came to stay with me. My ancestor, Devarata, sixth in descent from Nimi, the founder of our line, was given it to keep in safe custody.

Long ages ago, Daksha, the Patriarch, celebrated a grand sacrifice, in the course of which the assembled gods reserved not a portion of the offerings for the absent Mahadeva. Whereupon, the Wielder of the Trident waxed mighty wroth. He strode up to them with blazing eyes and cried, "This terrible bow of mine shall I never lay down, till every proud head before me rolls in the dust." The affrighted ones clasped his feet with humble prayers and with sweet words and repentant, chased away his awful ire. And the Moon-crested One, mollified therewith, handed over to them his redoubtable bow ; and they again entrusted it to the safe keeping of my ancestor.

Once upon a time, I was ploughing a piece of ground to celebrate a sacrifice thereon, when, lo ! there rose from the furrow, this gem of a girl, whom I took unto my heart. The curious circumstances under which she came to me gave her the name Sita and she grew apace, the Daughter of the Earth, life of my life, my other self.

Her I have made the prize of Valor, to be won of the strongest arm, and the boldest heart. The best and proudest of the Earth sought her hand in marriage, the marvellous child, that came not of human womb ; but one and all of them I sent away with the reply "None but the brave deserve the fair." Then the suitors all came to Mithila to try their chance and win the prize : but none of them, not one, succeeded in bending the redoubtable bow. Why, they failed to raise it from where it lay! Assured beyond doubt of their puny might, I dismissed them in no happy frame of mind. And, in the rage that filled their hearts, they joined their forces and besieged the fair Mithila, for ten long months and two. They knew that my forces were few and my coffers low ; and the shame of defeat goaded them to work grievous ruin upon my lovely capital. At the end of the year my resources were exhausted and blank

despair stared me in the face. But, I roused myself and won over the mighty Gods to grant me powerful armies : with which, I put to rout that evil crew, their ministers and their forces and scattered them to the winds.

And that famous bow, the apple of discord, blazing in its energy, am I but too glad to show unto these royal youths. If it so come about that Rama should string it, then will I, all willing, bestow on that son of Dasaratha, the daughter of my heart, Sita, who comes not of mortal parents.

CHAPTER 67.

The Broken Bow.

" Well have you spoken " said Visvamitra " and now let Rama have a sight of the famous bow."

Janaka turned to his officers and said " Convey here the celestial bow and render it due worship, of sweet incense and fragrant wreaths."

" On our heads be it " replied they and proceeding to the Royal palace, bore thence the bow divine. Full five hundred men, strong and stalwart, laboured hard to drag thither the black case of solid iron, eight-wheeled, in whose depths lay the mighty bow. The ministers placed it before their king and said " Here is the famous bow that the princes of the Earth hold in such high honour and that you wanted these princes to see."

Thereupon, Janaka respectfully addressed himself to the sage and the princely pair. " Here have I placed before you the peerless bow, held in high worship by the monarchs of my house. The best and bravest of the Earth have failed to essay the impossible task of stringing it. The very Gods, Asuras, Rakshasas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Kin-

naras, Uragas, nay, none of them, succeeded in using it, or stringing it, or raising it or handling it or even moving it from where it lay ; why, then, speak of puny mortals ? I have obeyed thy behests and have caused it to be brought here ; the princes are welcome to examine it."

Visvamitra heard him out and turned himself to Raghava. "Rama, dear, behold the bow."

At his word, Rama advanced to where it lay in its iron case, heaved up the lid, cast his eyes over it and said : "Master mine, have I your permission to handle the bow ? May be I would try to lift it or to bend it."

"Be it so" exclaimed the king and the sage.

Then Sri Rama grasped the weapon by the middle and held it aloft as if it were a feather, while the assembled thousand gazed in hushed amaze. Anon, he strung it and drew it even to his ear, when lo ! the mighty bow snapped in twain right at the middle. Awful was the crash, as when the bolts of heaven are loosened on the earth by the mighty arm of their Master. The earthquaked to her very foundations, as when mighty mountains are rent in twain. Every one there was struck senseless by the tremendous shock, and none save the king the great sage and the princes could stand it.

When the spectators struggled back to their senses' Janaka, his heart relieved of a load of anxiety, approached Visvamitra and said to him in deep respect, "Witnessed have I to-day the might and valour of the worthy son of Dasaratha, wonderful, inconceivable, and undreamt of by me. And Sita, the child of my heart, will now be the happy wife of Rama and shed a brighter glory on the royal House of Janaka. Fortunate am I, in that I have kept my word that my daughter shall be the bride of the strongest arm and the bravest heart : and her do I give, dearer to

me than life itself, in marriage to Rama. With thy permission, let ministers of mine hasten to Ayodhya on fleet cars, to entreat the royal Dasaratha to grace my humble abode. They shall acquaint him with the happy news of the prize that his valiant son has won here, my peerless daughter. Let them also tell him that his darling sons are safe in my capital and happy under the mighty protection of Visvamitra."

So spake Janaka, most eloquent ; and the holy One signifying his assent thereto, the king despatched his trusted ministers to Ayodhya with precise orders to inform Dasaratha of what transpired at Mithila and request the favour of his presence there.

CHAPTER 68.

Dasaratha invited to Mithila.

Janaka's messengers spent three days on the road and with tired steeds, reached the lordly Ayodhya on the fourth.

Approaching the royal palace, they spake unto the wardens, " Haste ye and inform your lord and master that the envoys of Janaka await his pleasure."

Dasaratha was informed of this at once and back they conveyed his commands to the messengers, " Ye are welcome to enter the royal palace, glorious in its magnificence."

They did so and soon stood in the presence of the Lord of Kosala, the aged Dasaratha, like unto the Angels of Light. With folded palms and restrained selves, the messengers humbly addressed the king in sweet words and calm. " Our master Janaka, the Ruler of Mithila, makes anxious enquiries through us again and again, in sweet and friendly terms, of thy well-being and peace of heart. Is it well with thee and with thy kinsmen? Is thy heart

ever engaged in the welfare of thy subjects ? Do the household Fires receive due worship at thy hands ? Thy priests and teachers, is it all well with them ? Does the current of their lives flow on smoothly and are they ever intent upon the search for Truth and upon the proper discharge of the duties of their high office ? Are thy people happy and contented as ever ? Next, with the permission of the great Viswamitra, he ventures to place before thee this request. 'It is not unknown to thee that I have instituted a trial of valour and skill among the various princes of the Earth and mighty warriors ; my daughter Sita, of divine beauty, is the prize of him who wins over the heads of the competitors. Great kings and famous warriors sought her hand and essayed the test I have set for them ; but they were as nothing before thy valiant son who chanced to come here in the wake of the sage Viswamitra. Thy god-like boy distanced them unspeakably and carried away the prize of valour from among the midst of countless champions, older in years, renowned kings of the Earth and veterans worn with fight and grown grey in war. In a vast concourse of the assembled multitudes of the Earth, princes and peasants, warriors and citizens, saints and sages, thy son, Sri Rama, of divine presence, broke in twain the wonderful bow entrusted to me by the Lord Mahadeva. And so I should, as promised, give my daughter Sita in marriage to him as the prize of Valour. I entreat thy consent to my request and pray thee to enable me keep my word. Deign thou to bless my humble abode with thy presence along with thy saintly priests and teachers. Tarry not, for thou shouldst, of a truth, behold thy lordly sons even now. It behoves thee to gladden a friend's heart and I doubt not that thou wilt give inexpressible pleasure to thy dear sons.' Thus does our lord and master, King Janaka of Mithila, speak to thee, in accents sweet and wise. Viswamitra sanctions his request and graciously thinks

with him." They delivered themselves thus and paused, restrained by the lordly presence of the ruler of Ayodhya.

Dasaratha heard the message of his friend and brother king ; it sank deep into his heart and gladdened it beyond words. He turned himself to his spiritual guides, Vasishtha and Vamadeva and to his other councillors and said, " Kausalya's Delight and my heart's joy, resides at present at the capital of the Videhas, led thereunto by the mighty Visvamitra, who extends over them his envied protection. Janaka, the great-souled One, has had an opportunity of acquainting himself in person with the might and prowess of Rama ; and now he desires to give his daughter in marriage unto Raghava. If his proposal seems good and fitting in your eyes, (and Janaka is not unknown to you as a royal sage), we should make haste to proceed to his capital, for it becomes us not to delay."

The sages assembled and the ministers, whose hearts were ever turned towards the interest of their master, expressed their joyful assent and approval. Then, Dasaratha gave it out to his ministers that he intended starting the next day. Meanwhile, the envoys of Janaka were invited to pass the night there and with right royal welcome and cheerful talk, the hours passed away.

CHAPTER 69.

Janaka and Dasaratha.

The next morning Dasaratha repaired to the council-chamber where he his kinsmen and priests awaited his presence. He called unto him Sumantra the Faithful and said "Let those in charge of the Royal Treasury start to day in advance and take with them large stores of gold and gems. The armies of our kingdom shall be ready

to march as soon as I give word, elephant, horse, foot and, chariot ; the conveyances relays and baggage-vans shall company them. Kindly request the holy sages Vasishtha, Vamadeva, Jabali, Kasyapa, and Markandeya the long-lived, to honour me by going in advance ; and have my chariot ready as soon as you can. Janaka's envoys are hurrying us and we have already delayed too long".

It was done, and in no time were they on the road, the sages in advance, the king next, and the army following behind. They marched by easy stages and on the fifth day sighted the realms of Janaka, who, duly informed of their approach, welcomed them right royally.

Soon he met the aged monarch and his heart rejoiced thereat. "Had your majesty a pleasant journey hither and safe ?" inquired he affectionately of his royal guest. "Honoured am I beyond words by your gracious visit to my humble place. Soon shall your heart rejoice to see the laurels your noble boy has won from many an older rival. And may I hope that the holy One there, even Vasishtha, has had a pleasant journey and the countless Brahmanas that have blessed my fortunate country by coming along with him. Verily do I seem to behold again the Ruler of the Immortals, Indra, girt by his band of Shining Ones. Sure am I that my dark days are over and my race stands high in the esteem of the worlds, in that I have been fortunate to secure an alliance with the high-souled Raghus, that mighty line of warriors. The morning Sun rises on the last day of my sacrificial rite and at its close I wish the wedding to be celebrated. The sages approve of it and I add my own request if it would be of any use."

To which, the aged Dasaratha replied in apt and skilful words (and he was no novice at that). "Friend of my heart !" said he, with a meaning glance at the sages around "have I heard right that the receiver of a gift

awaits the pleasure and the convenience of the giver ? You are to us the ideal of all virtues and we are ever glad to abide by your directions."

Janaka of Videha was struck with amaze at this reply of the saintly Dasaratha of straight speech, so thoroughly consonant as it was with righteousness and so highly redounding to his praise. They parted for the night and it was a pleasant time for the sages, who enjoyed unfeigned delight in the company of their brothers in wisdom, old friends and mates.

While, to the aged Dasaratha, it was the happiest day of his life. He could never gaze enough at his dear boys and his eyes were never off their lovely faces for a moment. What with the joy at being restored to his loved ones and what with the princely and hearty welcome of Janaka, the night wore away all too soon.

On his part, Janaka brought the sacrificial rite to a happy conclusion. Great was the glory of his spirit, for he was the wisest of his age and his eye saw into the Heart of things ; and in the sweet company of his daughters did the winged Hours pass in swift flight, in peace of heart and joyful anticipation.

CHAPTER 70.

The Race of the Sun.

The next morning, Janaka, having finished his daily round of religious observances, turned to his chaplain Sata-nanda, even as he sat in the midst of the sages, and said, " It is not unknown to you that Kusadhvaja, my younger brother, of great energy, resides in the blessed Sankasya ; magnificent, even as the Pushpaka, the aerial car, it is

situated on the banks of Ikshumati, whose furthest limits extend unto the sharp stakes let into the bed of the rapid river. Him do I desire to see, for he is the protector of my sacrifice ; and he should, of a truth, share this joy with me."

He spoke and soon there stood before him messengers, quick of grasp, skilful of speech and fleet of foot ; and at the command of the king, they were away, on swift horses, to bring the royal Kusadhvaja ; even so do the messengers of Indra haste for the Lord Vishnu. They were at Sankasya in no time and communicated unto its ruler the pleasure of his royal brother. He lost no time in complying with it and very soon had the pleasure of touching the feet of the godlike Janaka and his high priest Satananda. Janaka directed him to take his seat ; then sent for the prime minister, Sudaman, and said to him, " Seek thou audience of the Ruler of Ayodhya, and request his presence here with his sons and ministers."

Sudaman bowed low to his master and proceeded straight to the royal quarters of Dasaratha, to whom he respectfully conveyed the message of his lord. " Monarch of Ayodhya ! my master would know if it would please you to go ever to his residence, with your sons, priests, chaplain and others."

" We follow you " replied Dasaratha and very soon he was at the royal palace of Janaka, accompanied by his kinsmen, the holy sages and his countless retinue. " Your Majesty !" said he " the holy Vasishtha here is the patron saint of the line of Ikshvaku ; he is our spokesman on every important occasion and you know it. With the permission of Visvamitra and the other sages here, he will now proclaim our royal lineage to all who may list."

He spoke and ceased ; and Vasishtha, turning to Janaka and the assembled kings, spoke thus. " From the Unmanifested One issued Brahma ; and from the Four-faced One,

eternal, ancient and unchanging, was born Marichi ; Marichi begat Kasyapa ; Kasyapa begat Vivaswan ; Vivaswan begat Manu, known as the Vaivaswata, the first Lord of Men ; Manu begat Ikshvaku, the first king of Ayodhya ; Ikshvaku begat Kukshi ; Kukshi begat Vikukshi ; Vikukshi begat Bana ; Bana begat Anaranya ; Anaranya begat Prithu ; Prithu begat Trisanku ; Trisanku begat Dundhumara ; Dundhumara begat Yuvanaswa ; Yuvanaswa begat Mandhata ; Mandhata begat Susandhi ; Susandhi begat Dhruvasandhi and Prasenajit ; Dhruvasandhi begat Bharata ; Bharata begat Asita.

And him did his foes, the Haihayas, the Talajanghas and the Sasabindus, confront in battle ; his forces defeated and dispersed, the weak and spiritless Asita fled from his kingdom, and took refuge in the solitary depths of Bhrigu Prasravana and with him his ministers. Two wives had he, big with child at that time. One of them bore a bitter hatred towards the other and managed to poison her food. At that time, Chyavana, of the line of Bhrigu, a sage of mighty powers, lived thereabouts ; and him did one of the queens wait upon to be blessed with a fair boy. Kalindi (as she was called) the fair-eyed, (it was she who was poisoned by her rival) approached the Holy One and prayed to have a son born unto her. "In thy womb" replied he "there lies a son of immeasurable strength, great lustre and unfathomable energy.. But, poison, terrible in its effects, permeates his frame. Grieve not, noble lady ! for he will come to no mishap through that." She bowed and retired ; and unto her, devoted to her lord and heavy of heart at his misfortune, there was born, through the grace of Chyavana, a son, who came out of the womb even with the poison upon him administered unto his mother by her rival. Hence the world knew him as Sagara.

Sagara begat Asamanjas ; Asamanjas begat Amsuman ; Amsuman begat Dilipa ; Dilipa begat Bhagiratha ;

Bhagiratha begat Kakutstha ; Kakutstha begat Raghu ; Raghu begat Pravridha, the Man-eater, otherwise known as Kalmashapada ; Pravridha begat Sankhana ; Sankhana begat Sudarsana ; Sudarsana begat Agnivarna ; Agnivarna begat Sighraga ; Sighraga begat Maru ; Maru begat Prasusruka ; Prasusruka begat Ambarisha ; Ambarisha begat Nahusha ; Nahusha begat Yayati ; Yayati begat Nabhagha ; Nabhagha begat Aja ; Aja begat Dasaratha ; Dasaratha begat Rama and his brother Lakshmana.

And on behalf of the brothers, the worthy descendants of Ikshvaku, whose royal race is characterised by spotless purity, devotion to virtue, valor and straight speech, even unto the utmost, I ask of you your daughters in marriage. Happy will be the alliance and approved of by all, since the parties are so highly worthy of each other.”

CHAPTER 71

The line of Janaka.

And to him thus speaking, replied Janaka, in all reverence, “Hail to thee ! great sage ! it behoves one who gives away his child in marriage to proclaim his ancestry, if he come of a high and pure race. So, do me the favor to listen to me while I go through the line of my forefathers of happy memory.

There lived, of yore, a king, by name Nimi, a pattern of everything good and holy. The first and best of men, he won for himself immortal renown in all the worlds by his mighty deeds. Mithi was his son and he gave his name unto Mithila, of which he was the founder. He was the first who bore the name of Janaka ; and after him Udayavasu, Nandivardhana, Suketu, Devarata, Brihadratha, Mahavira, Sudhriti of great fortitude and prowess, Dhrishtaketu,

Haryasva, Maru, Praṭīndhaka, Kīrtirāṭha, Dēvamīḍha, Vibudha, Mahīḍhraka, Kīrtirāṭha, Mahāroma, Swarṇaroma, and Hrisvaroma ruled in succession, father and son.

And to the last, of noble soul, who knew better than many others the Mysteries of the Great Law, were born two sons, myself and next to me, the valiant Kuṣadhwaja.

After a long and happy reign, my father placed me in his seat and sought the quiet solitudes of the forest, committing to my charge the kingdom and my brother. And when my father departed for the bright abodes of the Blessed, I ruled over the land, following in the path of Justice trod by my ancestors of old, and with a brother's fond love cherished Kuṣadhwaja, the apple of my eye.

Sometime after, Suḍhanva, the powerful ruler of Sankāsyā, besieged Mithilā and sent me this insulting message, "Fail not to send me the bow of Siva that thou hast in thy keeping and thy lotus-eyed daughter Sītā along with it". Of course I could not put up with such an ungracious demand ; and in consequence, went forth to meet him in battle and laid him low. And to Kuṣadhwaja, whose valour gained me the day, I made over the kingdom of Suḍhanva. I am the first born of my father and he comes next to me. Verily shall I give my daughters in marriage unto your sons of mighty renown, Sītā of godlike beauty to Rāma, who bore her off as the prize of valour; and Ěrmilā, her sister, to Lakshmaṇa. Doubt me not ; you have my hand and word upon it, once, twice and thrice. It is with a glad heart that I keep my plighted troth; it is a pleasure to me and an honor to give my girls into your house. So, lose no time in going through the preliminary rites of marriage—Samāvaraṇa and Nāndī Srāddhas. The constellation Magha rules over this day ; and on the third from this, shalt we perform the marriage under Uttara Phalguni. For, I shall, of a truth, give my girls in marriage to your sons Rāma and Lakshmaṇa.

CHAPTER 72

THE GODĀNA

THEN answered him Viśvāmitra, while Vasishtha signified his assent thereto; "The royal houses of Ikshwâku and Vidêha, inconceivable is their glory and immeasurable. Search as you may, you come not across any that stand beside these. Râma and Lakshmaṇa, Sîtâ and Ûrmilâ stand beautifully matched, in beauty of form and righteousness of heart. But one more word I beseech you. Kuṣadhwaja here, your worthy brother, is the father of two maidens of peerless beauty ; and them I would even ask of you in marriage unto the great-souled princes, Bharata and Saṭrughna. Sons of the royal Dasaratha, the beautiful youths, of god-like prowess, yield not the palm to the great Deities themselves that rule the spheres. Grant my request, and knit in bonds indissoluble the royal houses of Ikshwâku and Janaka."

This proposal of the sage of holy vows, fell honey-sweet on the ears of the Lord of Mithilâ ; and doubly so, in that they were warmly supported by Vasishtha ; and he hastened to reply in all reverence.

"Thrice blessed indeed is my house, inasmuch as your holy selves are pleased to pronounce the alliance a well-matched one. Hail ! saintly ones ! Be it so ; let Bharata and Saṭrughna take the daughters of Kuṣadhwaja to wife. A beautiful sight it would be to see the four maidens wedded to the four royal sons of Dasaratha on the same day. The wise astrologers hold that the most auspicious day for marriage is that on which the moon is in conjunction with the asterism Uttara Phalguni ; for, Bhaga, the Lord of Generation, is ruler thereof."

He stood up and approaching the holy pair, resumed, "Your humble pupil am I, to whom you have deigned to show high favor. May you be pleased to grace these excellent seats. Daśaratha lords these wide domains of mine and he grants me no less lordship over Ayôdhyâ. Hesitate not to exercise your authority here and do what you will with your own."

Then replied unto him the Lord of Ayôdhyâ "You and your worthy brother here, are famed over the earth for your manifold graces of heart and mind. Right royally have you entertained the sages and the numerous kings here. All good be yours. Give me leave to retire to my quarters, for I have to perform the preliminary Srâddhas."

And with the permission of Janaka, Daśaratha repaired unto his palace, and Visvâmîtra and Vasishthâ along with him. The Srâddhas were duly conducted and the next morning, the king set about to perform the Gift of Kine. Hundreds of thousands did he give away to pious Brâhmaṇas, to secure the welfare of his sons. A hundred thousand cows, full-yielding, he gave away in the name of each one of his sons,—their horns plated with gold, each with its calf and milking vessel of bronze. And in honor of that glorious occasion of the Gift of Kine, did he make the virtuous Brâhmaṇas royal presents of untold wealth. The rites over, the aged Monarch sat there in the midst of his four sons and looked as grand and glorious as the Self-born One, surrounded by the Guardians of the Worlds on high.

CHAPTER 73

THE WEDDING

THAT selfsame day did Yuḍhājīt, son of the Kēkaya king and uncle to Bharaṭa on his mother's side, reach Mithilā. Daśaratha welcomed him warmly ; and after mutual enquiries of welfare, did the visitor address the Lord of Kōsala. "The Ruler of Kēkaya makes anxious inquiries after your well-being and desires me to tell you that those in whose welfare you are interested, enjoy peace and happiness. His heart yearns for a sight of my sister's boy and I am here to take him back. They told me at Ayōḍhyā, that you had come over here with your sons to celebrate their marriage ; and all eager to see my nephew, did I hasten here on the wings of speed."

A welcome guest was he to Daśaratha, who entertained the worthy prince right royally. A happy night they passed ; and next morning Daśaratha finished his religious observances and followed the sages on to the sacrificial grounds. At the auspicious moment, Vijaya, Rāma and his brothers, having completed the preliminary rites, came to the place in the wake of Vasishtha and the other sages of holy vows and sat by their royal sire.

Then rose up Vasishtha and spoke to Janaka. "Daśaratha, the Lord of Ayōḍhyā and his sons have come here ready for the consummation of the marriage, and await the pleasure of the Giver. Eternal blessings crown the heads of him that gives and him that takes. Perform this marriage and act up to your traditions."

At which words of the holy Vasishtha, Janaka, broad of heart and profound in his knowledge of Righteousness, cried out "Who stands warden at my gate and yet

awaits my orders to inform me of the arrival of my royal guests ? This kingdom is yours to command and curious is your hesitation to make yourself at home in it. My daughters, behold them seated near the altar, like lambent tongues of flame ; they have gone through the preliminary rites and I but await your arrival. Why not my royal brother proceed straight hither, but tarries ? ”

Daśaratha accepted the kind invitation and hastened to enter the hall and the princes and the sages along with him.

Janaka then turned to Vasishtha and prayed, “ Holy one ! Thou and thy saintly brethren here, conduct the marriage rites of Râma, the Worlds’ Delight.”

“ So be it ” replied the sage, and proceeding to the altar along with Viśvâmitra and Satânanda, laid out the fire-place therein and decorated it with sweet perfumes and bright flowers. Fresh shoots peeped out from many a vessel of gold, from many a branching vase, from many a jewelled bowl, ranged upon it in neat procession, while countless censers wafted sweet perfumes over the hall. Shells, spoons, ladles, salvers, ready prepared to welcome the honored guest, fried corn and colored rice unbroken in gemmed goblets, stood there in magnificant array. With solemn rites they spread the sacred grass thereon and lighted the holy fire, while Vasishtha made offerings to the Radiant God. Janaka then led forward Sîtâ gaily attired for the occasion and placed her before the Fire, in front of Râma, and spoke these words of solemn import.

“ Sîtâ here, my daughter, shares with thee the duties of life. Accept her from me in sign of holy wedlock. May all good be thine.

A faithful wife she will prove to thee, my noble girl, and will ever be with thee, even as thy own shadow.’

He paused and poured over Râma’s hands the consecrated water. Shouts of applause and approval from sages

and gods shook the hall and rang along the welkin ; celestial music played on high and flowers of heavenly fragrance rained on the happy couple.

Sîtâ thus given in marriage with due rites, Janaka next turned to Lakshmaṇa and with a joyful heart exclaimed, “ Come unto me, Lakshmaṇa, and receive from me my daughter Úrmilâ, whom I bestow upon you. Be quick about it and all good be yours.”

Bharata's turn came next and to him said Janaka, “ Noble scion of the race of Raghu! Take thou Mâṇḍavî unto thee for wife” ; and last came Saṭrughna, to whom Janaka made over Srutakîrtî with the words “ Join ye your hands in holy bands of matrimony. Every one of you is blessed with all desirable graces of body and mind and have kept your observances ; and it is but meet that you take upon yourselves the duties of a householder's life.”

Whereupon, the four royal youths clasped the hands of the four maidens, directed thereunto by the holy Vasishtha. The princes then went round the Sacred Fire, the altar, Janaka and the sages assembled ; and the after-marriage rites were duly gone through as enjoined by the Holy Books. And no sooner did the bridal pairs join hands than the delighted gods showered upon their happy heads the flowers of heaven. Music gay and martial, blended with the sweet strains of the golden-throated Gandharvas, while the lovely Apsarasas danced in joyous throng thereto. Such was the wonderful sight witnessed on the wedding day of those illustrious descendants of Raghu. And with the joyful notes still in their ears, did the valiant youths pace the Sacred Fires around, once, twice and thrice and lead their happy brides homeward ; while, girt by his kinsfolk, did Janaka follow near, fondly gazing.

CHAPTER 74

RÂMA OF THE AXE

WHEN the shades of Night melted away before the golden shafts of the Orb of Day, Viśvâmitra took kind leave of the kings and departed for his distant home in the north, leaving behind him his mighty blessings, that hovered around the princes even as ministering angels. And close upon that came the departure of king Daśaratha for his capital, to which his brother-king gave reluctant leave.

Loth to part, Janaka followed him a long way ; and right royal was the dowry he bestowed on his girls. Herds of kine past count ; rare and costly carpets ; cloths of lovely texture and priceless value ; untold wealth in gold and gems, coral and pearl, slaves and servants, horses and elephants, chariots and troops, magnificently attired and gaily caparisoned; these and many other gifts evidenced his loving heart and royal munificence. It was with much ado that Daśaratha could persuade the happy king to turn back to his capital.

Well, it was over, the painful parting ; and the Ruler of Ayôdhyâ, set his face towards his capital and journeyed thither by easy stages, in the sweet company of his noble sons and the saintly hermits.

And him thus proceeding, there met the frightful cries of birds, ill-omened and harsh ; while the beasts of the earth passed from right to left, signs of good, strangely contradicting the former. His heart in a quiver with fatherly anxiety and his senses all in a whirl, Daśaratha turned questioning eyes of fear to Vasishtha and cried,

“ Lo ! these signs ! Hoarse are the cries of the birds at large, and bode no good. The beasts of the forest pass

from right to left and that presages safety. I feel a dire sinking of the heart and a mist rises before my eyes. What may it be, your Reverence?"

And to him the sage returned sweet answer, "The birds warn us of the near approach of some fearful danger, while the beasts allay it. Let not this trouble thy royal heart."

And upon them thus conversing, there rushed a mighty wind at which the solid earth trembled in affright, and the giant trees of the forest strewed the ground with their shattered limbs. A pall of darkness swept across the bright luminary ; the quarters of the earth were confused, North and South, East and West and could scarce be discerned. Next, a shower of ashes rained down and reft them of what little reason they had. Alone, Vasishtha and the other sages, Dasaratha and his sons, appeared to be aware of what was taking place around them.

And in that fearful darkness in which the armies of the king were dimly visible even as so many statues of ashes, they saw a terrible Being approach, with massive coils of matted hair crowning his lofty head. Râma of the Axe was he, the son of Jamadagni, of the royal race of Bhrigu,—even the dread One who laid low, time and oft, the proudest heads of the earth. Strong and unassailable even as the mighty Kailâsa, unapproachable even as the Fire of Dissolution, blazed forth his lustre, from which the eyes of ordinary men shrank away blinded. On his lofty shoulders rested the terrible Axe and a huge bow ready strung ; his hand grasped a mighty dart, even as the Lord Mahâdêva when he went forth against the Demons of the Three Cities.

Great was the anxiety that filled the heart of Vasishtha and the other sages of pure vows and strict observances ; and they spake to one another, "Is it possible that the cruel

fate of his sire still rankles in his heart and he has once again lifted his terrible axe against the royal race on earth ? Dire was the vengeance he took and ample ; he put away his anger and with it his desire for vengeance. It behoves him not to lay his axe once again at the root of the Solar Race ”.

They hastened to offer him respect due and sought to pacify the fiery spirit with sweet words of welcome. He of the Axe accepted it of the sages ; and as if heeding them not, haughtily turned towards Râma the son of Daśaratha and cried out.

CHAPTER 75

RÂMA AND RÂMA

“**R**ÂMA ! thou son of Daśaratha, Râma, the voice of fame speaks in no measured tones of thy marvellous might. Thy breaking of the bow of Mahâdeva at Janaka's hall, I know it all. That was a wonderful feat and one would hardly think thee capable of it. Close on the heels of the report I hastened hither with this bow. String thou this weapon of my honoured sire—no light task for thy boyish hands—and fit this shaft to it. Then shall thou convince me of thy boasted might ; and then shall I be pleased to offer thee the coveted honour of battle with me : for, thy valour would then entitle thee to be so distinguished.”

At which words of terrible import, the aged king turned towards him of the Axe a face blanched with terror and pitiable with grief and hands of humble entreaty and said : “A Brâhamâna thou and of cloudless fame, thou hadst, long ere this, laid aside thy relentless vengeance against the race of kings. With raised hands I implore thee to harm not my innocent ones. Of the race of Bhrigu thou comest, men renowned for saintly wisdom and chaste vows. Thy word thou passed unto the Lord of the Celestials and laid aside thy weapon of wrath. Thou betookest thyself to the paths of peace and righteousness, made over the earth that was thine by conquest unto Kâsyapa, and sought the quiet solitudes of Mahêndra. And lo! here hast thou come to send us all along the path of destruction ; for, doubt not that we will outlive Râma, our life and soul, if any harm should light on his fair head.”

But Parasurâma seemed to ignore him and his words

and addressed himself again to Râma. "Of yore, Viśvakarman, the Architect of the Gods, fashioned two bows, strong, firm and of celestial might, famed through all the worlds. One of them the Gods gave to Siva when he marched forth to destroy the fierce Asuras of the Three Cities ; and *that* was the one you happened to break. The other that I have here, was given to the Lord Vishṇu, equal in strength to the one handled by Rudra and no easy thing to essay.

Lo ! how it blazes forth in its divine lustre !

Well, the gods sought out Brahma and questioned him about the respective mights of the Lords Vishṇu and Mahâdêva. The Self-born One read into their hearts and set the one against the other. Great was the fight that ensued between the two and frightful to behold ; for, each strove his best to get the better of the other.

Then Vishṇu sent forth a mighty shout. 'Hum' he cried and the terrible bow of Mahâdêva gave way, and he himself was stupefied thereby. Then, Angels and Gods, sages and saints, approached and implored them to lay aside their wrath. When they beheld the bow of Siva break before the might of Vishṇu, the shadow of doubt that lurked in the hearts of the Gods vanished and Vishṇu stood the mightier of the two. Having paid high reverence unto Him, they took respectful leave of Rudra and left for their respective regions and Brahma and Indra along with them.

The Lord Mahâdêva, his heart still sore with the sense of defeat, gave his bow and shafts to king Dêvarâta of the Vidêhas : while Vishṇu handed over his mighty bow and arrows unto Richika of the line of Bhrigu.

My sire Jamadagni, of unrivalled prowess, got it from him. Later on he engaged himself in severe austerities and unspeakable was the might that accrued to him there-

by: and he laid aside his weapons of war, useless to him and never to be resumed. But, King Arjuna, base of heart, slew in cold blood the unoffending sage. The cruel death of my innocent sire burnt into my heart like molten lead and cried out for vengeance, dire and swift. And I laid my axe at the root of the race of kings, times out of count, as fast as they grew. I wiped them off the face of the earth, which I subdued by the might of my arms. And at a grand sacrifice, I offered it as a gift to the great Kâsyapa, the Holy One. Thereafter I repaired to Mount Mahêndra and engaged myself in severe austeries. There do I yet remain, in that happy resort of Gods and Angels.

But, to-day I happened to hear the Gods speak to one another in the high heavens of thy wonderful feat, in tones of admiration and awe. They said that thou, out of thy marvellous energy, broke asunder the divine bow of Siva; and all at once I hastened thither to assure myself of the truth of the report.

Take thou this bow, used of yore by the Lord Vishnu. Walk in the path of thy forefathers of stainless fame. Fit thou this shaft of fiery energy unto the string. Well, if thou but succeed in doing that, I shall then be glad to offer thee a chance to measure thyself with me."

CHAPTER 76

THE BITER BIT

RÂMA heard him out ; his father's presence kept back the hot words that rose to his lips ; yet, he managed to reply in cool and even accents of icy disdain.

" Worthy descendant of Bhrigu ! Not unknown to me your fierce deeds, which I excuse in consideration of the debt of vengeance you owe your honored sire. But you seem to regard me as a low specimen of the warrior class, weak and despicable, fallen from the high traditions of his forefathers. Well, this day shall you have a chance of knowing me better ; and shall convince yourself of my energy and valour."

A storm of suppressed wrath shook his powerful frame as he, with a quick motion and grace, took the bow and arrow from the hands of the dread son of Jamadagni. Playfully he strung it and laid the arrow on the string ; then turned himself to Râma of the Axe and cried in words winged with angry flame,

" This divine shaft, used by the Lord Vishnû, strikes down the mighty and shrivels up the energy and pride of him against whom it is discharged. None can shoot it in vain. But you are a Brâhmaṇa and an object of reverence unto me ; and doubly so, in that you claim kinship with my venerable Master, Viṣvâmitra. That alone keeps back the shaft, which, else, would have drunk your heart's blood ere this.

Now, which do you choose ? Shall I deprive you of the high regions you have won by the force of your Tapas ; or of your unimpeded power of motion through the worlds above and below ?".

Meanwhile, Gandharvas and Apsarasas, Siddhas and Châraṇas, Kinnaras and Yakshas, Râkshasas and Nâgas, sages and gods, flocked to the spot to behold that wonderful sight, and at their head, the Ancient of Days, Brahma. They saw the son of Dasaratha as he stood there, his hand grasping the mighty bow of Vishnu and the dread shaft drawn to his ear and ready to take its flight. The beings of the Earth stood dazed and listless; while the haughty son of Jamadagni felt himself drained of his valour and fiery might and gazed powerlessly on the hero. The superior energy of Râma absorbed his proud strength and sunk him in torpor quite.

Then, lifting eyes of lack-lustre hue to the bright-eyed boy before him, he spoke in accents slow and painful.

"Of yore, I made a gift of this broad earth to Kâsyapa. 'A moment ago' said he, 'you were lord of the world, but now it is mine. And you shall not stay in my dominions.' The words of the great One are a law unto me; and I make it a point never to pass the night here. I have given my word unto Kâsyapa that the Earth shall be his. So I would even request you take not from me my power of free motion through the worlds. Quicker than a flash of thought, shall I speed back to whence I came, the beautiful Mount Mahêndra. Worlds of surpassing glory have I won by my hard Tapas; this powerful dart shall destroy them for me. Delay not. Your wonderful mastery of this divine weapon has opened my eyes to the great truth. Know I not that Thou art the Changeless One, the Destroyer of Mađhu, whom the Lords of Light are proud to call their God and Ruler. All glory be thine, Thou scourge of the wicked! Behold the Shining Ones ranged along the sky, gazing with never satisfied eyes on Thee, of unparalleled fame, and of unapproachable energy in battle. No sense of disgrace do I feel at being discomfited by Thee, the Lord

of the Universe. Let loose the shaft, I pray Thee and soon
shalt Thou see me taking my way to Mahêndra."

Then Srî Râma discharged the arrow of divine might ;
and the son of Jamadagni lost the bright regions that he
had made his own by his long and severe Tapas. Râma
of the Axe went round in meek reverence Râma, the
son of Daśaratha and sang his praises high. The bright
gods ranged along the firmament took up the strain and
made the welkin ring with their shouts of joy. Back sped
Paraśurâma to Mount Mahêndra ; and the Earth and the
sky were bright again and clear and the quarters thereof.

CHAPTER 77

BACK TO AYODHYÂ

WHEN Râma of the Axe had taken his departure, the victor handed over the bow and arrows to Varuna of unspeakable might, who stood by invisible to the rest. He then saluted Vasishtha and the other sages with profound reverence, and turning to his sire found him still dazed with grief and fear.

“Jamadagni’s fiery son,” cried he “is far away by this time, and will not return in a hurry. Give orders to your forces and retinue to resume their march towards Ayôdhyâ, delayed by this trifling annoyance. See you not they wait for it impatiently ?”

“Gone is Jamadagni’s son”—these words fell like sweet music on the ears of the afflicted Dâsarâtha and brought him round. He strained his darling to his breast, smelt him on the head, felt him all over to see whether he was safe and said to himself, “Verily, this day have I passed through the dread portals of Death and come back among the living—I and my dear son.” And with a bright face he directed his troops to proceed to his capital.

Right royal and hearty was the welcome his happy citizens accorded to their beloved monarch, of untarnished glory, come back among them with his sons of mighty arms. They advanced to meet him, even when he was far away from the city and lined the roads leading thereto. And Dâsarâtha entered his capital amidst the hearty blessings of the Brâhmaṇas and the jubilant shouts of welcome of his loyal subjects. Gaily they decked it for the occasion ; the roads were swept clean and well-watered and strewed thick with sweet flowers of rare perfume ;

pennons and flags, banners and streamers, festoons and garlands, triumphal arches and inscriptions met him on every side ; sweet strains of music, vocal and instrumental, gay and solemn, martial and melodious greeted his pleased ears wherever he turned. And thus he and his sons of mighty fame passed on to his royal home, that towered aloft even as the lofty Home of Ice and Snow and as gay and grand. Joy unspeakable filled his aged heart ; for were not his desires fulfilled, even beyond his wildest hopes ?

Meanwhile, Kausalyâ and Sumitra, Kaikêyî and the other queens of Daśaratha, were busily happy with welcoming to their royal home the wives of their sons, as became their rank and station—Sîtâ, and Ûrmilâ, Mândavî and Śrûṭakîrtî. The princesses were next taken to the temples of the gods to offer reverent worship and humble thanksgiving--(dressed in gay robes and flashing with gems and gold), while bards and minstrels, poets and eulogists called down every blessing on their fair heads. Next, they paid their respects to every one that deserved it and repaired unto their mansions, that put to blush the lordly home of the Guardian of Riches. They made large gifts to Brâhmaṇas, of kine, gold and corn, and passed their lives in the enjoyment of every kind of pleasure, in the sweet company of their lords.

And the royal sons of the Lord of Ayôdhyâ, those great-souled Ones, of unequalled fame on earth, ever waited on their noble sire with sweet solicitude, anticipating his least wishes. The hearts of their elders they won by their bright virtues and rare tact ; and they were not the ones to let any chance go by. Their days were one long dream of unalloyed bliss ; for, wherein did they lack ? Married to the loves of their hearts, perfect in every art of warfare, with the wealth of the worlds at their disposal, and

surrounded by friends who lived in them and for them alone, how could their happiness be otherwise than ideal?

Sometime after, his father called Bharata unto him and said, “Bharata dear, Yuḍhâjît, your uncle and son of the ruler of Kekaya, waits here to take you with him unto his kingdom. Him have I promised thereunto at Mithilâ, in the presence of the saintly ascetics. It behoves you to go with him and gladden his heart.”

“Nothing would please me better” replied Bharata. He saluted his sire and Râma, lovingly embraced Lakshmana, ; and taking kind leave of his mothers and of his mighty brother Râma, the sweet friend of all beings, he took his departure, accompanied, of course, by the inseparable Saṭrughna.

Râma and Lakshmana, thus left behind, waited upon their godly sire of unparalleled renown. Under the advice and guidance of his father, Râma, the soul of virtue, looked after the interests and welfare of the citizens ; but, withal, the duties to his parents and elders were his first care and lay next his heart. Even thus did he endear himself to all by his sweet ways and saintly life, father and mother, Brâhmaṇas grown grey in sacred lore, and the loyal citizens, happy under the benign rule of his father. His unfailling might, and ideal virtues outran his growing fame ; and all looked up to him in love and reverence, even as the created beings regard their Lord and Maker, the Self-Born One.

And the happy years chased one another with light feet as they tripped over the heads of Râma and the love of his heart, Sîtâ, the fairest of the daughters of the Earth, as centred in each other, they grew more and more into each other’s soul and being. Dear was Sîtâ unto Râma, as the wife of his sire’s choice ; and dearer yet did she make

herself unto him, through her divine loveliness and rare excellences. And Sîtâ loved her lord with a love passing speech, passing belief. He was the life of her life, the soul of her soul. And heart spoke to heart plainer and more powerfully than feeble words, poor expressions of the myriad-hued human thought. Râma's heart went out to her, as it did to no one else, to this daughter of Janaka, the royal sage of Mithilâ, fair as a goddess, even as the Divine Mother come down among mortals. Nay, the Almighty Parents, Vishnu and Lakshmî, had not a brighter home and a happier than Râma in the sweet company of his princess of ravishing beauty, whose love towards that worthy son of the royal sage was boundless as Eternity, stronger than Fate.



NOTES

ON THE

BALAKANDA

Valmeeki set himself to place before men the heart-doctrine of the Vedas. The Ithihasa, whose meaning lies on the surface, gives us friendly advice ; the Epic that preserves its treasures in deeper depths, admonishes us like the object of our love. Our poet has utilised the two in his poem. He knew, best of all, the defects that mar a perfect Epic. He should compel the respect and admiration of the best and brightest intellects. He proceeds to show, in the first four chapters of the Balakanda, that his Ramayana satisfies the most exacting critic. In the first of these, he unfolds the subject and the purpose.

“Bow in reverence to the Teacher ; wait upon him ; question him keenly, closely and without reservation, until your doubts are at an end. Thus and no otherwise can you get access to the truths enshrined in the Vedas” says the Lord in his Geetha (*IV*, 34). The Sruthi enjoins the aspirant after divine wisdom to learn it only through the Teacher ; and, it directs the latter to impart it only to him who seeks it with his heart and with his soul. Valmeeki illustrates this hoary tradition in the questions he put to Narada on the nature of Brahman. He begins by saluting Him whom he worships in the sanctuary of his heart, and after Him his teacher. “Wisdom is most precious when imparted by the Teacher”; “Verily, he who has found a good Teacher and capable, knows Brahman”—these Vedic texts led Valmeeki to expatiate upon the manifold perfections of his Teacher.

P. 1.—2. *The Thretha Yuga :—*

Yugas.	Adi Sandhi	Yuga Varshas.	Anthya Sandhi.	Total.	Maha Yugam.
Kritha ...	144,000	1,440,000	144,000	1,728,000	4/10
Thretha ...	108,000	1,080,000	108,000	1,296,000	3/10
Dwapara ...	72,000	720,000	72,000	864,000	2/10
Kali ...	36,000	360,000	36,000	432,000	1/10
Total ...	360,000	3,600,000	360,000	4,320,000	1

Thus, a Mahayuga is made up of 4,320,000 mortal years. 71 Mahayugas make a Manvantara; but, its prologue and epilogue occupy each 1,728,000 years. So, the latter half of the epilogue forms the first half of the prologue of the next Manvantara. 14 Manvantaras and 15 interludes make up a Kalpa; in other words, $(14 \times 71 + 4/10 \times 15) 1000$ Mahayugas = 4,320,000,000 years. A day of Brahma forms a Kalpa; and his night is of equal duration. 360 days of Brahma make up his year. 100 years of Brahma make up his life-period, which again is but as the twinkling of an eye to Maha Vishnu—*Soorya-siddhantha*.

During the second half of the present Brahma's life, in the 51st year, on the first day, known as Swethavaraha-kalpa, the seventh Manvantara (Vaivaswatha), in the Mahayuga and in the Thretha-yuga, 28th the second of the series, the Lord Maha Vishnu came down on earth as Sree Rama.

3. *Sage* :—The Valakhilyas and the Vaikhanasas are two of the most distinguished varieties. “ The Vaikhanasas came from the nails of the Supreme Brahman ; and the Valakhilyas from His nether parts.”—*Sruthi*,

V. R. VII. 1, classifies them thus :—

East :—Kausika, Yavakreetha, Gargya, Galava and Kanva.

South :—Swasthyathreya, Namuchi, Pramuchi and Agasthya, (Athri, Sumukha, Vimukha—*Thilaka*.)

West :—Nrishadgu, Kavasha, Dhaumya, Raudreya.

North :—Vasishtha, Kasyapa, Athri, Visvamithra, Gauthama, Jamadagni and Bharadwaja.

But, the Mahabharatha, (*Anusasanaparva* 150), gives a different version.

East :—Yavakreetha, Raibhya, Arvavasu, Ausheeja, Kaksheevan, Bala, Kanva, Barihishad—the Priests of Indra.

South :—Unmucha, Pra muchu, Swasthyathreya, Dridhavya, Oordhwabahu, Thrinasoma, Angiras and Agasthya—the Priests of Yama.

West :—Dridheyu, Ritheyu, Parivyatha, Ekatha, Dwitha, Thritha and Sarasvatha, son of Athri—the Priests of Varuna (*Ushanka* and *Krishna*—*Ib.*, *Santhiparva* 208).

North :—Athri, Vasishtha, Gauthama, Kasyapa, Bharadwaja, Visvamithra, Kausika, and Jamadagni—the Priests of Kubera.

Vishnupurana (*III*, 6) divides the sages as :—
Rajarshis like Visvamithra, who attained that level from Kingship ; *Devarshis* like Narada, who rose to that height from Godship ; *Brahmarshis* like Vasishtha, who are either the sons of Brahma or Brahmanas.

But, Vayupurana understands it differently. The *Brahmarshis* are the descendants of Kasyapa, Vasishtha, Angiras, Athri and Bhrigu, the sons of Brahma and the founders of the Brahminical Gothras (clans). The *Devarshis* are the Valakhilyas, Kardama, and Kubera ; sons of the Prajapathis Krathu, Pulaha and Pulasthya ; Parvatha and Narada, sons of Kasyapa ; Achala, son of Prathyoosha ; and Nara-Narayana, sons

of Dharma. The *Rajarshis* are Ikshwaku, Janaka and the like. The Brahmarshis dwell in the Brahma-loka, the Devarshis in the worlds of the Gods and the Rajarshis in the heaven of Indra.

The Vedas :—In the beginning they were divided into four parts and comprised many crores of sentences. Maha Vishnu takes upon himself to arrange them in every Dwapara of the twenty-eight Maha-Yugas in this Vaivasvatha Manvantara. He is then known as Veda-Vyasa.

The following personages have held the office till now :—

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Brahma. | 15. Thraiyyaruna. |
| 2. Manu Sswayambhuva. | 16. Dhananjaya. |
| 3. Sukra. | 17. Krithanjaya. |
| 4. Brihaspathi. | 18. Rina. |
| 5. Savitha. | 19. Bharadwaja. |
| 6. Yama. | 20. Gauthama. |
| 7. Indra. | 21. Uththama. |
| 8. Vasishtha. | 22. Vena. |
| 9. Sarasvatha. | 23. Thrinabindu. |
| 10. Thridhama. | 24. Valmeeki. |
| 11. Thrikrisha. | 25. Sakthi. |
| 12. Bharadwaja. | 26. Parasara. |
| 13. Anthariksha. | 27. Jathukarna, and |
| 14. Vapri. | 28. Krishnadwaipayana |

Aswaththama, son of Drona, will exercise that function in the next Dwapara.

Dwaipayana divided the Vedas into four and gave the Rik, the Yajus, the Saman and the Atharva to his disciples Paila, Vaisampayana, Jaimini and Sumanthu. Paila divided the Rigveda into two Samhithas, (rescensions) and gave them to Indrapramathi and Bashkali. The latter divided his portion among his pupils Bandhya, Agnimathara, Yagnyavalkya and Parasara. Indrapramithi taught his Samhitha to his son Mandukeya.

(The Vayupurana tells us that it passed from him in succession to Sathyasravas, Sathyahitha, Sathyasree and to Sakalya Rathanthara and Bashkali, pupils of the last. This was the very Sakalya who rashly opposed Yagnyavalkya in the sacrificial hall of Janaka and being defeated, lost his life in consequence). Vedamithra, also known as Sakalya, divided the same among his students Mudgala, Galava, Vathsya, Saleeya and Sisira. Sakapoorni, the pupil of Indrapramathi, divided his portion and his Vedic glossary among Krouncha, Vaithalaki, Valaka and Niruktha-krith. Another Bashkali taught his Samhitha to Kalayani, Gargya and Katha-Java.

Vaisampayana divided the Yajurveda into 27 branches and taught it to his disciples Syamayani, Aruni, Alambi and others.

Once upon a time, the sages gave out that any one of them who did not attend a conference to be held on Mount Meru within a given time, should incur, within seven nights, the sin of killing a Brahmana. Vaisampayana kept away ; he hit, by accident, the child of his sister and it died instantly. The sin of Brahminicide caught him in its dark folds. He called unto him his pupils and directed them to perform expiatory penances on his behalf. But, Yagnyavalkya kept aloof and exclaimed, " How can I get on with these miserable and weak-minded Brahmanas?" His teacher turned upon him in a rage and cried out, " And this is how you speak of your fellow pupils, who are, for aught I know, as good as yourself. What have I to do with any disciple who heeds not my wishes?" " It was no haughtiness of mine " replied Yagnyavalkya " nor self-conceit that prompted my words. I spoke but the barest truth. But, I see this is no place for me. And here is what I have learnt of you." With that, he ejected from his mouth the texts of the Yajurveda and passed

out. The other youths changed themselves into Thiththiris (partridges) and gobbled up the texts stained with blood. Hence, the Samhitha was known as Thaithhareeya. Yagnyavalkya then prayed hard to the Solar Deity and got from him the knowledge of those texts of the Yajur-Veda which even his teacher knew not. It is known as the Sukla Yajur-Veda, and the Vajasaney-Samhitha.

Jaimini taught the Sama Veda to his son Sumanthu and his grandson Sukarma. The latter divided it into a thousand branches and taught it to his disciples Hiranyanabha and Paushyinji. Fifteen disciples of each of them founded as many schools, north and east. Krithi, another disciple of Hiranyanabha, taught 24 Samhithas to as many scholars.

Sumanthu taught the Atharva Veda to Kabandha, his pupil, through whom it descended in two portions to Devadarsa and Pathya. Maudga, Brahmabali, Saulkayani and Pippalada, learnt it from Devadarsa; while Jajali, Kumudadi and Saunaka had it from Pathya—*V. P. III, 4, 5, 6.*

The Vedas are divided into, the *Samhithas*, containing the Manthras used in religious rites ; the *Brahmanas*, explaining the relation of the Manthras to the ritual, the rules of procedure, illustrative anecdotes, philosophical reflections, subtle instructions, expiatory penances, laudatory texts and genealogical history ; the *Aranyakas*, to be studied in the forest solitudes by hermits and ascetics ; and the *Upanishads*, revealing the Science of Brahman.

Rig Veda.

i. The *Samhitha* is divided into eight Ashtakas ; each Ashtaka is sub-divided into eight Adhyayas ; each Adhyaya is sub-divided into 33 Vargas; and each Varga contains 5 stanzas. There is also another arrangement of it in ten Mandalas, 85 Anuvakas, 1077 Sookthas

and 10580 Riks. Kathayana's Anukramanika mentions the first division, while the second is found in the Aithareya-Aranyaka, the Grihya-Soothras of Asvalayana and Sankhayana, the Prathisakhyā and the Niruktha of Yaska.

Mandalas one and ten are composed by several Rishis; the second by Grithsamada ; the third by Visvamithra; the fourth by Vamadeva ; the fifth by Athri ; the sixth by Bharadwaja ; the seventh by Vasishtha ; the eighth by Kanya ; and the ninth by Angiras. Yaska's Niruktha (Vedic Glossary) and other Nighautus (lexicons) are the works of reference upon it. Sayanacharya has written a masterly commentary upon the Saṁhitā.

It contains the mantras to be recited by the Hotha who offers the sacrifice to the Fire.

ii. *The Brahmanas* :—the Aithareya-Brahmana in 40 Adhyayas and the Kausheethaki-Brahmana in 30 belong to this Veda. Soma-yaga, Agnihothra and the Coronation ceremony form the subject of the first ; while Soma-yaga is dealt with in the second. The former is commented upon by Sayana, and the latter by Vinayaka.

iii. *The Aranyakas* :—The Aithareya-Aranyaka in 5 parts, and the Kausheethaki-Aranyaka in 3 parts are commented upon by Sankaracharya.

iv. *The Upanishads* :—Aithareya, Kausheethaki, Nadabindu, Athma-bodha, Nirvana, Mudgala, Aksha-malika, Thripura, Saubhagya-lakshmi, Sarasvathee-rahasya and Bahvricha belong to this.

v. *Soothras* :—The Srautha-soothras (sacrificial manuals) of Sankhayana in 18 Adyayas and of Asvalayana in 12 ; and the Grihya-Soothras (house-holders' manuals) by Asvalayana, Sankhayana and Saunaka are attached to this Veda. Saunaka is also the author of a Prathisakhyā-soothra. It is a grammatical or rather phonetic treatise, regulating the euphonic combination of letters and their peculiar

pronunciation, according to the practice of the different Sakhas of the Vedas. It does not divide the words in the same way as the Vyakarana, but takes actually formed words as they occur in the hymns and teach the phonetic changes they undergo, the mode of pronouncing the accents, etc. In fact, they show how the Pada text is converted by a process of euphonic combination into the Samhitha. Panini has written a Siksha (Phonetic Directory) on the Rigveda, and Pingala on the Prosody of it. There are two Anukramanikas (Indices) one by Kathayana and the other by Saunaka. The latter gives the Seer, the Deity, the Metre, and the Object of each manthra. The Indices aim at preserving the texts from corruption, by exactly calculating the number of hymns, verses, words and even syllables in the work.

Yajurveda.

The Thaiththareeya-samhitha (Krishnayajus) and the Vayasaneeya-samhitha (Suklayajus) form the two main divisions. More than half of the manthras in this are taken from the Rig-veda. The invocation of the Gods during the sacrifice, their praise, the fire-altar, the bricks, the sacrificial posts, the Rajasooya, the Asva-medha, and the other details of sacrifice, the Aupasana, the Agnihothra and other domestic rites form the subjects of it. It is indispensable to the Adhwaryu (the Director of the sacrifice).

Krishnayajus.

i. *Samhitha:*—It has three Sakhas or branches—the Taiththareeya-sakha of Apastamba, the Kathaka of the Charayaneeyas, and the Vathseya of the Aukheeyas. The Apastamba-sakha is divided into seven Kandas, 44 Prasnas, 651 Anuvakas and 2198 Kandikas (containing about 50 words each).

The Kathaka-sakha is divided into five parts, of which the first three is sub-divided into 40 Sthanakas. The fourth

contains the mantras to be recited by the Hatha and the fifth the mantras used in the Asvamedha sacrifice. Sayana-charya, Balakrishna, Bhatta-kausika, Bhaskara-misra, Bhava-swami and many others have commented upon it.

ii. *The Brahmana* :—The Thaiththareeya-brahmana.

iii. *Aranyaka* :—The Thaiththareeya-aranyaka.

iv. *Upanishad* :—Katha, Thaiththareeya, Atharva-sikha, Atharva-sira, Brahma, Kaivalya, Swethasvathara, Garbha, Amritha-bindu, Narayana, Amritha-nada, Kalagni-rudra, Kshurika, Sarvasara, Suka-rahasya, Thejo-bindu, Brahma-vidya, Yoga-thathva, Thri-sikhi-brahmana, Dakshinamoorthi, Skanda, Sareeraka, Yoga-sikha, Ekakshara, Akshi, Adhyatma, Avadhootha, Katha, Rudra-hridaya, Yoga-kundali, Pancha-brahma, Prana-gnihothra, Varaha, Satyayana and Kali-santharana.

v. *Soothras* :—The Srautha-soothras of Bodhayana, Bharadwaja, Apasthamba, Hiranyakesi and others.

Sukla-yajus

i. *Samhitha* :—is divided into Madhyandina-sakha and Kanva-sakha. The Vajasaneyam-samhitha is divided into forty Adhyayas, 303 Anuvakas, 1975 Kandikas. The first and the second chapter, treat of the Darsa and the Paurnima sacrifices ; the third of the Agnihothra and the Chathurmasya sacrifices; the fourth to the eighth of Agnishtoma; the ninth and the tenth of Vajayapeya and Rajasooya ; from the eleventh to eighteenth of the erection of fire-altars ; from the twenty-second to twenty-fifth of the Asva-medha ; from the twenty-sixth to thirtieth of the manthras to be used in the above ; from the thirtieth to the fortieth of Purusha-medha, Sarva-medha, Pithri-medha, and Pravargya; and the fortieth of the Science of Brahman. The sixteenth is known as Satha-rudreeya, the thirty-first as Purusha-sooktha and the fortieth as the Eesavasya-upanishad.

Maheedhara, Uvatacharya, Madhava and others have commented upon it.

ii. *Brahmana*:—The Sathapatha in 100 Adhyayas. The second part of the 14th Kanda is known as Brihadaranyaka.

iii. *Upanishad* :—Eesavasya, Brihadaranyaka, Jabala, Hamsa, Parama-hamsa, Subala, Manthrika, Niralamba, Mandala-brahmana, Adwaya-tharaka, Paingala, Bhikshuka, Thureeyatheetha-vadhootha, Thara-sara, Yagnyavalkya and Mukthika.

iv. *Soothra* :—The Srautha-soothras of Kathayayana and Vaijavapa, the Grihya-soothras of Paraskara and the Prathisakhya-soothras of Kathayayana. Krishna-yajus has two Anukramanikas connected with the Athreya and the Kathaka Sakhas; while the Sukla-yajur-veda has the Anukramanika of Kathayayana.

Sama Veda

i. *Samhitha*:—The first part is divided into 6 Prapthakas and the second part into 9. There are 1549 Riks in it, of which all but 78 are taken from the Rig Veda. It is sung by the Udgatha, during the Soma-yaga, when offerings are made to the fire. They are also divided into Gramageya-gana, Aranya-gana, Ooha-gana, and Oohya-gana.

ii. *Brahmana* :—Thandya, Shadwimsa, Adbhutha, Chandogya, Samavidhi, Arsheya, Devathadhyaya, Upanishad, Samhithopanishad, Vamsa, etc.

iii. *Upanishad* :—Kena, Chandogya Goodharunika, Maithrayani, Maithreya, Vajrasoochi, Dhyana-bindu, Yoga-choodamani, Vasudeva, Maha, Sanyasa, Avyaktha, Kundika, Savithri, Rudraksha, Jabala, Darsana and Jabali.

iv. *Soothra* :—The Srautha-soothra of Masaka, Latayayana, Drahyayana, and the Anupada-soothra, Nidana-soothra, Pushpa-soothra, Panchavidhi-soothra, Prathihara-soothra of Kathayayana, Danda-lakshana-soothra, Upakrandasoothra, Kalpanupada, Anusthoṭhra, Kshudra, and many

others; the Grihya-soothras of Gobhila, Khadira, Drahyayana and Gauthama; and the Karma-pradeepa of Kathyayana.

Atharvaveda

i. *Samhitha*:—is divided into 20 Kandas, 38 Prapathakas, 760 Sookthas and 6,000 Manthras. Sayana has commented upon it.

ii. *Brahmana* :—Gopatha.

iii. *Upanishad*:—Prasna, Mundaka, Mandookya, Pancharudra, Brihad-jabala, Nrisimha-thapani, Narada-parivrajaka, Seetha, Sarabha, Maha-narayana, Rama-rahasya, Rama-thapini, Sandilya, Parama-hamsa-parivrajaka, Annapoorna, Soorya, Athina, Pasupatha-brahma, Thripura-thapini, Devi, Bhavana, Bhasma-jabala, Ganapathi, Maha-vakya, Gopala-thapini, Krishna, Hayagreeva, Daththareya and Garuda.

iv. *Soothra* :—The Prathisakya of Saunaka named Chathuradhyayika, the Sroutha-soothra of Vaithana, the Grihya-soothra of Kausika, and the Nakshathra-kalpa, Santhi-kalpa, Vithana-kalpa, Samhitha-kalpa and Abhichara-kalpa are connected with it.

This is indispensable to the Brahma, who is to watch over the right conduct of the sacrifice.

The Mahabhashya of Pathanjali enumerates 21 Sakhas of the Rigveda, 100 of the Yajus, 1,000 of the Sama and 9 of the Atharva ;

The Mukthikopanishad ascribes 150 to the Yajus and 50 to the Atharva.

5. *Vedangas* :—i. *Siksha*.—Panini is the earliest writer upon it. The origin of the various letter-sounds from the various parts of the body, the intonation given to them—Udaththa (high), Anudaththa (low), and Swaritha (long)—are dealt with in detail. Narada, Vyasa and Bharadvaja have also written upon it.

ii. *Vyakarana*.—It is generally held that there were nine schools of grammar and that Hanuman learned

them from the Sun-god ; but, Panini is the standard authority on the subject. Kathayana and Pathanjali have commented on his Soothras. It deals with the Laukika (secular) and Vaidika (Vedic) words, their roots, terminations, modifications, joinings etc. The other schools are not held as orthodox ; they are not Vedangas ; they are applicable only to the Puranas.

iii. *Chandas* :—Rishi Pingala is the recognised writer on Prosody. It deals with Gayathri, Brihathi and the other metres used in the composition of the Vedic hymns.

iv. *Niruktha* :—Rishi Yaksha is the standard exponent of it. The derivation and the history of rare and obsolete words used in the Vedas, and a general glossary to the hymns, with occasional dissertations on Philology and the growth of language are the main points discussed. It is divided into Pada-kanda (on words) and Artha-kanda (on their meanings). There is also extant a work on the same subject by Sakapoorni.

v. *Jyothisha* :—Soorya, Gargya, Narada, Maya and Parasara are some of the earliest writers thereupon. It treats of the proper time to begin and end the various complicated rituals, domestic and public, the results attributed to them and the future of individuals and nations.

The Siddhanthas by Pulisa, Romaka, Vasishtha, Soorya and Pithamaha and the works of Varaha-mahira and Aryabhatta, are the modern authorities on the subject. Astronomy, Horoscopy and Natural Astrology are its main divisions. An adept of this science should, according to Brihat-samhitha (Ch. II), must be of noble birth and of agreeable appearance; meek, truthful and without jealousy; with well-proportioned limbs, joints well-knit, and of good growths, he should have no physical defects ; he should be blessed with a fine physique and a high sonorous voice ; he should have fine hands, feet, nails, eyes, chin, teeth, ears, forehead, eye-brows and head. Of cleanly habits, able,

noble-minded, eloquent, he must be a man of originality and imagination ; he must possess a knowledge of time and place ; he must be free from nervousness ; he must be learned in matters of expiatory ceremonies, hygiene, occult magic and ablutions ; he must be a favourite of the Gods and an observer of fasts and penances ; he must possess a remarkable memory and should solve any difficulty, save in matters of direct divine interference.

He should have mastered the Thanthra-sasthra (Astronomy); he should have studied the Panha-siddhanthas. He should have a correct knowledge of a Yuga (4320000 solar years), Varsha (a solar year), Ayana (6 solar months), Rithu (2 solar months), Masa (a solar month), Paksha (15 solar days) Aho-rathra (a solar day), (Yama) (1/8 of a solar day), Muhoortha (1/30 of it), Nadi (1/60 of it or 24'), Vinadi (1/60 of a nadi or 24"), Prana (4"), Thruti ($\frac{1}{33750}$ of a second) and other divisions of time and space. He must have studied the causes of solar, Savana, siderial and lunar months, as well as of intercalary lunations and intercalary days ; of the beginning and end of a Shashtyabda (a cycle of 60 years), a Yuga (5 years), Varsha (a year), Masa (a month), Dina (a day), Hora (an hour), and of their lords. He must know the divisions of time relating to the sun, the moon, the earth, the Pithris, the stars, the men and Brahma ; their similarity and dissimilarity ; and the fitness or otherwise of each for particular purposes. If the five Siddhanthas should lay down different results, he must be able to calculate correctly the places of the sun and the planets by means of shadow, water-level and astronomical instruments ; of the termination of their Ayana (course northward and southward), of their being due east to the observer after rising and of their altitude at any time. He must know the reason for the correction required for the conversion of the Heliocentric into Geocentric longitude and *vice versa*.

versa; the causes of the Ayana of the sun and the planets and of their slow and rapid movements at different times. In solar and lunar eclipses, he must be able to calculate the times of their commencement and end, the places of first and last contact, their magnitude and duration; and in total eclipses, the time between middle eclipse and the beginning or end of total phase; he must also ascertain the colour of the eclipsed lunar disc. He must calculate beforehand the times of the moon's conjunction with the planets, as well as of planetary conjunctions. He must know the length of the daily motion of each planet in its orbit and of the orbit itself. He must know the Earth's revolution round the Sun and its rotation round its axis; its shape and size; the latitude of a place and its complement; the nature of the hour-circle; the difference between six hours and half a day; the times of the rising of the Zodiaca signs. He must be able to calculate time from shadow and shadow from time; and to convert Longitude into right ascension and right ascension into Longitude. He must be able to answer questions and meet objections in clear and distinct language.

In Horoscopy, he must know such divisions of space as Rasi (a sign of zodiac occupying 30°), Hora (15°), Drekkana (10°), Navamsaka ($3^{\circ} 20'$), Dwadasamsaka ($2^{\circ} 30'$) Thrim-samsaka (1°) and their strength or weakness horoscopically; the horoscopic strength of the planets with respect to their direction, place, time, motions, conjunctions and the like; the temperament of the planets and the parts of the body larded over by each; the mineral divisions of each; the caste, sex and authority. He must be able to state from the time of conception or birth of a person, the particulars connected with these occasions; to say in what cases a child will die in infancy; to determine the period of one's life; to divide it into planetary divisions and sub-divisions, and to

apply the Ashtavarga tables to a given horoscope (to discover from the positions of the planets in one's nativity how they affect one's fortunes as they pass through the several zodiacal signs). He must know how the Raja, the Chandra, the Dwigraha and the Nabhasa-yogas (particular positions of the planets) affect the fortunes of men. He should ascertain the effects of the position and look of the planets, to calculate the cause of one's death and discover his future life. He should fix auspicious periods for marriages and the like. In the case of a king marching out upon his enemy, he must determine the fitness or otherwise of a Thithi (lunar day), a Vara (week-day), Karana, Nakshathra (asterism), Muhoortha and Lagna (the rising sign). He must be able to interpret natural gestures and dreams and to state when a prince ought to start for battle to secure victory (the king's minister, his astrologer and his priest slept in the temple of the gods and their dreams were interpreted by experts). Ablutions, offerings to the fire in honour of the planets, offerings to appease evil spirits, the interpretation of phenomena connected with the sacred fires and with elephants and horses while mounting the same—he must be proficient in them all. He must be able to give directions about the capture of the enemies' fortress ; to predict the success or failure of an undertaking ; to decide upon the favourable halting places for the king's army ; to interpret the colour of sacrificial fires, omens, the language and gestures of fighting men ; he must know when to use the Shadgunas—*Sandhi* (Peace), *Vigraha* (War), *Yana* (Strategic movements), *Asana* (Truce), *Dvaidheebhava* (Duplicity) and *Samasraya* (Submission) ; the four *Upayas*—*Sama* (Reconciliation), *Dana* (Bribery), *Bheda* (Alienation) and *Danda* (Chastisement) ; and when to employ ministers, spies, messengers and feorſt men,

Natural Astrology treats of the motions of the sun and the planets ; of their size, color, rays, brilliancy, shape, changes, disappearance and reappearance ; of their courses and deviations therefrom ; of their retrograde and re-retrograde motions ; of their conjunction with and their places among the stars ; the effects of the Heliacal rising of Canopus and the Bear (Agasthya-chara and Saptharshi-chara) on particular parts of India corresponding to particular portions of the ecliptic ; of the stellar divisions of every substance, animal and plant ; of their increase or decrease according to the motion of the planets among the stars ; of the formation and interpretation of various figures presented by the planets when meeting together ; of planetary conjunctions and planetary years of the indications of the monsoon ; of the moon's conjunction with Rohini (the fourth constellation), Swathi (the 15th) and the two Ashadhas (the 20th and the 21st) on particular week-days in the month of Ashadha ; and of predicting from the same the nature of the coming weather and the crops ; of the prediction of immediate rain from surrounding phenomena ; of judging the nature of the future crops from the growth of plants and flowers ; of the halos round the sun and moon ; of lines of clouds crossing the solar disc at rising and setting ; of winds, meteoric falls, false fires, earthquakes, dust-storms, thunderbolts, the fanciful shapes of clouds, the red sky immediately before sunrise and after sunset ; of the price of food-grains ; of gardening ; of the Indradhwaja (erecting of a flag-staff during certain annual ceremonies performed by princes) ; of the rainbow ; of the prediction of events from casual words and gestures, and from the cawing of crows ; of architecture ; of the formation of the zodiacal circle for purposes of horary astrology ; of the prediction of future events from phenomena connected with the deer,

the dog, the jackal, the cow, the horse, the elephant and the motions of the wind; of the construction of temples, towers and palaces ; of the casting and the founding of images; of the growth of plants and trees ; of under-currents; of certain annual ceremonies to be performed by princes for success in war.

vi *Kalpa*:—Aswalayana, Kathayana, Apasthamba, Bodhayana, Drahayana, Bharadwaja, Sathyashadha, Vaikhanasa and Hiranyakesi have written Manuals of sacrificial rites.

6. *Fourfold Path* :—i. Discrimination between the eternal Brahman and the transient Universe, resulting from a thorough study of the Vedas, the Smrithis, the Ithihasas, and the Puranas and from the instructions of the Teacher.

ii. Supreme disgust with and indifference to the joys of this world and of the higher ones, even up to where Brahma abides.

iii. Restraint of the organs of sense and action ; the absence of the least desire to enjoy the pleasures of the senses ; equanimity in joy and sorrow, in that they are but the unfolding of causes generated in the past ; unswerving concentration of the mind upon what his studies and teachings have declared to be the Highest; and supreme faith in his Teacher and in the words of the Holy Scriptuers.

iv. An eager desire to taste of the delights of eternal life, and escape from the burning fire of material joys and sorrows.

7. *His place* :—Valmeeki was a Brahmana by birth and a Vanaprastha by his mode of life. A householder's life prepares him for it ; grey hairs and the sight of his grand-children are the warnings given him that he should quit his home and seek the solitude of the forest. His diet, his comforts, his servants, his articles of luxury—he should turn his back upon them all. His wife may

accompany him if she prefers it or, remain in charge of his sons. The sacred fire that he had been tending, the pots, the ladles and the spoons useful in sacrifices, are the only articles he should take with him. He should gather, from day to day, fruits, roots and wild grain to perform the five great daily sacrifices. The barks of trees or the skins of the deer supply him with the necessary raiment. He should ever honour the guests that come to him and entertain them with his best. He should allow his hair and his nails to grow ; and he should bathe at sunrise and at sunset. He should ever give and never take ; he should be the friend and helper of all sentient beings; he should put up with the inclemencies of the weather, with hunger and thirst ; he should never omit the daily recitation of the Holy Books, nor to worship the sacred Fires. The offerings to be made on the new and the full-moon days should be continued on such scale as he could afford. The offerings of cakes and boiled rice to the Gods should be made as before, during the Agrayana (the first harvest), the Chathurmasya (the rainy months), the Uththarayana and Dakshinayana (the summer and the winter solstices). He must make his own salt from the saline earth of the forest. He may lay in his small store of provisions day by day, or once a month, or once in six months, or once in a year. He may eat in the last quarter of the day or the night ; or on alternate days ; or on every fourth day ; or once a fortnight ; or he may regulate his food according to the waxing and waning of the moon. Or, he may satisfy his wants with the fruits upon the trees, with fallen flowers or roots. Never should he allow his senses to stand in the way of his progress. When tired, he may gently walk about or sit on some kind of seat, or recline on the ground. During the summer, he should surround himself with five fires; during the rains, he should stand to his neck in water ; during dewy months

he should cover himself with a wet cloth; and all along, his mind must be away from his body and fixed upon the Supreme. Every day he should offer libations of water to the Gods, to the Fathers and to the Sages. He must gradually increase the length and frequency of his fasts.

Six months of such a life prepare him for the next stage, where he absorbs in himself the three Fires which he had been tending till then, and sits silent and calm under a tree. No prayers, no offerings, no libations, no sacrifices, no fasts, no vigils and no observances for him. The Upanishads and the teachings of the great Sages form the subject of his thoughts and meditation, day and night. He may sustain life upon the fruits or the flowers that fall from the tree; or he may take it from men of his own order who still have a home; or from such house-holders as reside in the forest; or he may go to some village and receive eight handfuls of food. Impervious to heat or cold, wind or rain, snow or hail, hatred or love, joy or sorrow, pleasure or pain, he stretches himself at ease under the nearest tree. When the load of years becomes too heavy for him to carry, he may walk on straight, subsisting upon water and air, until his mortal fame falls lifeless; or he may, when sure of himself, take up the next stage of life—that of the Sanyasin.

10. *Narada*:—Out of the navel of the Lord came a lotus; and upon it was Brahma, the Ancient of Days. He is one of the Trinity, the Fashioner of Forms. He is the Ruler of the Brahmanda and the fourteen worlds within it. His life-period comprises 311,040,000,000,000 lunar years of mortal men. He is now in the second half of his life (Parardha), the fifty-first year the first Ayana, the first month, the first fortnight, the first day of it; of the fourteen Manvantaras that make it up, six have gone by; of the 71 Mahayugas that go to form a Manvantara,

27 have passed away ; Of the four Yugas that comprise a Mahayuga, three have been added to the past. Of the 432,000 years that must elapse before Kaliyuga, the fourth, comes to an end, we are in the year of grace 5012, named Sadharana (1911 A. D.)

He had five faces at birth, one of which he happened to lose later on. Sarasvathi, the Goddess of Speech, is his wife ; the Swan is his conveyance ; the Sathyaloka is his abode ; and Manovathi is his capital.

Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanathana and Sanath-kumara were his first-born. They paid no heed to his instructions to increase and multiply. So, he evolved Mareechi from his mind, Athri from his eyes, Angiras from his mouth, Pulasthya from his ears, Pulaha from his naval, Krathu from his hands, Bhrigu from his skin, Vasishtha from his life-breath, Daksha from his toe, Narada from his stomach, Dharma from his right breast, Adharma from his back, Desire from his heart, Anger from his brows, Greed from his lower lip, Speech from his tongue and Kardama from his shadow—*Bh. III. 12.*

Narada was a Gandharva at first, later on a Soódra and at last the son of Brahma.—*Ib. VI. 7.*

The Matsya-purana and the Manu-smrithi take him as the tenth Prajapathi (complementary to the usual nine). The Brahma-kaivartha-purana gives it out that he was cursed by his father to be the head of the Gandharvas, in that he taught the Science of Renunciation to the Haryasvas and the Sabalasvas and prevented them from multiplying. In the Brahma-purana, Vayu-purana and Hari-vamsa, he is said to have been saved by Brahma when Daksha was about to curse him for a similar offence; and to have been let off with being born the son of Kasyapa and a daughter of Daksha. But, in another portion of Vayu-purana, Kasyapa is said to have adopted him as his

son. The Brahma-purana and the Hari-vamsa (Karthaveer-ya-charithra) make him the son of Haridasa, a Gandharva, while the commentator upon the latter names him Upabharhana. He was a proficient in playing upon the Veena and was consequently invited by some Brahmanas to play during the sacrifice they were conducting. He happened to fall in love with some women there, whereupon, the good Brahmanas cursed him to be born a Soodra. But, the spiritual forces generated in his past births led him on to serve the holy Sages and *that* ranked him amongst the mind-born sons of Brahma.

Narada and his nephew Parvatha made a compact, that they would have no secrets from one another and wandered over the earth (*M. B. Santhi-parva* 30.) He forms one of the audience in Indra's hall (*Ib. Sabha-parva*).

He is unrivalled in his knowledge of the Ithihosas, the Puranas, the Vedangas, the events of the past Kalpas and the mysteries of the Law. There is not a spot in the fourteen worlds that he is not acquainted with. He is a very high authority on the science and art of government. The Vidyas and the Kalas (Sciences and Arts) live in him. As a speaker and conversationalist, Erihaspathi is nowhere beside him. The countless hosts of the Shining Ones pay him supreme honours. He stands first and foremost in the theory and practice of Music and Gesticulation. (The English language has no word to render adequately the meaning of Bharatha-sastra or Abhinaya-sastra. It is peculiar to the East and more so to India. It represents the various shades of emotions and feelings by appropriate gestures and movements of the face, the eye-brows, the eyes, the lips, the neck, the arms, the hands, the trunk and the feet, to the accompaniment of vocal and instrumental music, the words of which

give out the theme. Rishi Bharatha is the first and the highest exponent of the science and the art).—(*Ib. id. 5.*)

He is gifted with remarkable patience, intelligence, humility, courage, truthfulness and splendour. His fame and lineage are stainless and high. With senses under perfect control, he has kept the vows and observances. An adept in the inner mysteries of the Science of Brahman, he exemplifies in his life the best and the purest teachings of the Vedas. Pure of speech, of pleasant manners, he knows the hearts of men like an open book, but loves them all the more. Ever bent on doing good to others, his heart knows not evil. Alike to all, he has no friend nor foe. The world and its fleeting joys and sorrows touch him not but, he acts the part of a worldly man to perfection. He very rarely speaks of himself and then only in the humblest terms. The entire range of knowledge is within his ken; but he is ever an eager student. Seemingly absorbed in the concerns of external life, his soul is ever centred in profound meditation on the Brahman. Yet, with all these, his heart knows not a shadow of pride or egoism. Hence, Devas and Asuras, friends and foes reverence him alike—(*Ib. Santhi-parva, 230.*)

Narada and Thumburu belong to the group of the Gandharvas—(*Ib. Adi-parva, 132.*)

Narada, Thumburu, Gopa and other Gandharvas played and sang during the feast that Bharadwaja gave to Bharatha—(*V. R. II, 91*), So, Narada, the uncle of Parvatha, is not the same as Narada, the associate of Thumburu. The Bhagavatha (I. 5. 6) narrates one of his previous births as follows :—

“ During the last Kalpa, I was the son of a woman who waited upon a group of sages. During the rainy months, they abode in one place and I was deputed to attend to their wants. I was a boy, but had nothing in common with my fellows. My senses were under perfect control ; my

mind was never my master ; calm-eyed, silent, grave and not given to lightness, frolic or impulsiveness, my masters could not fail to remark my extreme reverence to them and my almost intuitive attention to their least wishes. The Lords of Compassion deigned to regard me with favour and one day allowed me to partake of the remains of their food. All at once, a change came over me ; my heart was cleansed of all its stains ; and I was seized with an eager desire to follow the life they led. I was privileged to hear them narrate the Lord's life and doings, and my devotion and love to the Stealer of Hearts grew apace. My whole being was absorbed in the contemplation of His divine perfections ; my bodies, gross and subtle, were but so many mists that clouded the Divine Sun beyond ; my fiery devotion burnt away the dark and passionate elements in my Self.

When the rains were over, the Great Ones left the place ; but, they were gracious enough to initiate me in the innermost secrets entrusted to them by the Lord. The Veil of Illusion was rent in twain before my eyes ; I saw beyond it into Heart of the Universe; I set my feet on the path that leads to the Throne of Light. And in the fulness of time, I had a vision of the Supreme ; the utmost of knowledge and power was mine.

Some time after, a snake breathed death upon my mother. I rendered her the last offices and left the place for the mountains of the north. Forests, hills, rivers, towns, villages and hamlets I left behind and chose a dark and dense wood to reside in. I sat myself down under an Aswattha tree with senses under control and concentrated mind. Soon I lost myself in the contemplation of the Divine Form; my mind was to me but a dream; tears of joy welled from my eyes: the feet of the Lord were enshrined in my heart. And, lo ! the Lord stood before me in all His beauty, in all His glory, in all His might. My love to Him,

supreme and over-powering, steeped my heart in unspeakable joy ; and I became entirely oblivious to everything else. Then spake the Lord unto me and said "The heart must be washed pure of desire and hate, love and anger, before it can stand in my presence. It is not within the range of your past karma that you should have a vision of myself and my glory ; but, I come to you that you may realise the absolute necessity of centering your mind and heart suffused with love upon me and me alone ; for, then, the world will hold nothing that can enchain you. The faithful service you have rendered to the holy sages has drawn you to me. When this physical vesture shall fall away from you, you shall abide in me for ever ; Evolution and Involution shall have no power over you; and your consciousness shall know no break, no limit." With that parting benediction, he disappeared from my sight.

When the moment drew near for me to shake off the mortal coil, it dropped away of itself and I arose from it in the pure and dazzling Garments of Light. When, at the end of his Day, Brahma retired within himself, his Breath drew my body into his own. When, at the end of his Night, he came out of his sleep and began the work of evolution anew, I came out of him with Mareechi and the other mind-born sons. I am an Eternal Celibate ; the Lord has given me power to range through the fourteen worlds of this Brahmanda without let or hindrance. The Shining Ones have given me this Veena adorned with divine notes ; and on it I play ever, singing the glories of the Lord. Countless are the Jeevas whom I have enabled to cross the ocean of material existence."

In short, we understand that Narada was the repository of the highest knowledge and wisdom of the last Kalpa. He is the first sage of this Kalpa. The seven-stringed Veena, on which he plays, represents

the seven great divisions of Divine Wisdom ; and he is the GREAT TEACHER. Alone among Gods and men, he holds along with Sarasvathi the right and privilege to play on the divine Veena. Sages, kings, gods—all consult him on the most momentous questions and follow his advice. He stands behind Valmeeki, Vyasa and the other sages, who brought down to men divine knowledge and wisdom. Says the Lord in his Geetha (X, 16), " Among the divine sages Narada am I." It is absurd and ridiculous in the extreme to hold with the ignorant world, that he is a fomentor of quarrels, a spy, a tell-tale and a delighter in the misfortunes of others. The wise know him as but one of the Lords of Karma, meting out to each Jeeva the results of his past ; he is but the Adjuster, the bringer-about, rather the judge that pronounces the karmic decrees. He is also one of the Keepers of the Records of Time. He arranges the great cycles and the smaller ones.

10. *Morning* " Valmeeki spent an hour or two in his cottage after his guest left it, his thoughts absorbed in the eventful conversation of the morn. All at once, he found that it was high time for the mid-day bath."—(V. R. I, 2.)

18. *Strains* :—There lived, of yore, a Brahmana named Kausika, who devoted his life to the science and the art of music. He dedicated it to the service of the Lord, whose greatness and glory he set himself to sing. When his life on earth was over, Maha-vishnu took him to his own world ; and in honour of his servant, he gave him an entertainment, where the divine Choristers led by Thumburu, the Gandharva, displayed their skill and proficiency in the noble art. Narada could not behold without feelings of envy and spite the honors showered upon the Gandharva. Hari failed not to notice it; calling unto him Narada, he said, " Charity, Sacrifices, and Thapas give me not as

much delight as to hear my life and doings sung to the accompaniment of perfectly-rendered and flawless music. Thumbruru, the Gandharva and Kausika, the Brahmana are the living examples of it. Do you desire to be as they, and lie close to my heart ? Then, seek out one Ganabandhu, a hooting-owl that dwells on mount Manasoththara and tell him that I sent you to learn music of him."

Narada found the owl surrounded by a host of Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Yakshas and Apsarasas to whom he taught the noble art. He communicated to him the Lord's message, was graciously accepted and for 360,000 years he was a pupil under him. "I have taught you all I know" said his master at the end ; and forthwith Narada came back, his heart all a-fire to demolish his hated rival Thumbruru. Approaching his house in the Gandharva-loka, he was amazed to find all around it countless men and women cut to pieces. "Who may you be " cried Narada "that have been reduced to this miserable plight ?" And they wailed him a reply, "We are the Powers that rule over the notes; we are the gods and goddesses of the Ragas (melody-types). Somewhere in the world, there lives a wicked one, Narada so called, who has taken it into his head that he must sing and play. Every time that he does so, the discord is so horrible that it tortures and reduces us to what we are ; later on, comes Thumbruru whom we serve, and by his perfect music restores us to life and health." And then, Narada said to himself "A nice musician am I, and well am I qualified to defeat Thumbruru. I am glad that I have not announced my name and mission." So, back he went on the wings of speed to where the Lord lay reclined on the myriad folds of the Serpent of Eternity, gently lulled by the throbbing waves of the Ocean of Milk. Maha-vishnu received him with a smile and said, "Great indeed is the progress you have made under Ganabandhu ; but, you

were not well-advised when you went against Thumbru with that poor equipment. In the twenty-eighth Dwpara-yuga of the Vaivasvatha-manvanthara, I go down on earth as Krishna in the clan of the Yadus. Come to me then, and I will place you on the path that will lead you to where Thumbru stands. Till then, learn what you can of the Gods, the Gandharvas and the Kinnaras."

Accordingly Narada wandered through the worlds, humbler in spirit, his heart ever-turned towards the Lord and his lips ever sounding his praise. Once, he went to Sathya-loka and took part in a concert with Haha and Hoo-hoo, the Gandharvas that grace the audience-hall of the Ancient of Days. He won sweet praise from his father.

Another day, he ventured to approach the house of Thumbru ; but, the presiding deities of music never so much as deigned to notice him. Overcome with shame, he came back and for a long time sat at the feet of the ablest exponents of the art.

At last, the Lord came down on earth as he promised to do ; and Narada went to him of and humbly proffered his request. Krishna directed his wife Jambavathi to instruct Narada in music. A year he spent with her, another with Sathyabhama and two more with Rukmini. But, he was as far as ever from the goal of his aspirations. His long period of probation and his association with the high and mighty personages under whom he learnt purified his heart of envy, jealousy and spite. Then, the Lord took him in hand, and initiated him into the higher mysteries of the art. " You may now go and have it out with your old rival Thumbru " said Krishna " Nay, nay " exclaimed Narada " No more of that if you please. I have got over that foolishness, once for all. My only prayer is to be allowed to stand in your presence through all eternity and join with my brother

Thumbaru in singing your greatness and glory." "Be it so" replied Krishna "Now, you are indeed perfect ; and there is none dearer unto me. The gods and goddesses that erst while shunned you as a pest, shall be your faithful servants for all time."—(Adb. R. VI, 7.)

He is also known as the author of the Brihan-naradeeya Purana, the Naradasmrithi, the Naradabhakthisoothra and the Naradaseeksha.

24. *Impelled* :—The Lord knew that his work down on earth would be slowly undermined by the ravages of Time, that the Good Law established among men would grow fainter and fainter in men's hearts. So, he directed Brahma to take the necessary steps to counteract the evil. The latter composed the Original Ramayana in a hundred crores of stanzas and taught it to Narada and the other sages of his world. Who shall carry the divine Message to the hearts of men ? Who but Valmeeki, that arose to his present pinnacle of wisdom and purity solely and wholly through the might of the divine Name ? Narada gave him the life-record of Sree Rama as it lay imbedded in the hymns of the Rigveda. Valmeeki rendered it, later on, into the Samkshepa or Laghuramayana, that forms the first chapter of the Epic.—G. o's *preface to V. R*—A. R. *Manoharakanda*, 1.

"The Rig, Yajus, Sama and the Atharva Vedas, the Ithihasas, the Puranas, the Fathers, the Shining Ones, the Science of Brahman, the sciences and the arts current among the Gods, the Beings of the Middle World and the Nether, the kings, the constellations and the Dragons of Wisdom—all these do I know" says Narada, in speaking of the Bhoomavidya. In the words of Apasthamba, he is amply endowed with the prime qualifications of a Teacher of the divine wisdom. He has passed through the stages of study, meditation and realization ; and no one could desire

a higher Teacher in whom should be gathered all the excellences of birth, knowledge, wisdom, purity and divine grace.

"Let a Brahmana be free from desires, having examined the worlds produced by Karma and being convinced that nothing eternal can be the fruit of Karma. Let him, if he wishes to know It, take with him sacrificial fuel and approach the Teacher who is proficient in the Vedas and whose consciousness is eternally centred in the Brahman. And to him who thus approaches him with mind subdued and with senses under control, the Teacher will truly impart that Science of Brahman through which he can know the Purusha, who is Eternity and Truth."—*Mundakopanishad I, ii, 12-13.*

The first stanza of the poem clearly lays down the qualifications of the Disciple as also of the Teacher, in consonance with the Vedic text quoted above.

The grand epic opens with the word 'Thapas' which is a symbol of Brahman. No Sanskrit writer, lay or religious, ever begins his work otherwise than by offering devout and reverent salutation to the Dweller in the Sanctuary of his heart; and Valmeeki begins his immortal poem by the calling down the grace of the Supreme Brahman upon him and upon his work. By a slight permutation of the words we read *Niratham thapas swadhyaya*, which means 'having profoundly meditated upon the Brahman as Unbounded Wisdom and Supreme Bliss.' We have here the salutation to the Almighty. A slightly modified form of the above would give us *Thapassu niratham naradam adhyaya*, which means 'having offered my profound respects to Narada, whose life is one long study of the Holy scriptures and earnest meditation upon its mysteries.' We have here the salutation to the Teacher of Divine Wisdom.

"The twenty-four thousand stanzas of the Ramayana are based upon the twenty-four letters of the Gayathri. Each thousand begins with a letter of the sacred manthra. The letter *Tha*, that forms the first of the series, is also the first letter of the first word *Thapas*. "It confers good upon him that utters it and upon him that listens to it."—*Sahithya-choodamani*.

"The letter *Tha* destroys evil. It has its source in Water; Brihaspathi is its presiding deity; and, as such, it is bound to confer all good. The fool who proceeds to compose stanzas before he has mastered the knowledge of the letters, their origin, their number, their correllating elements, their seed (Beeja) and their presiding deities, inevitably brings destruction upon himself and upon those that listen to his stanzas."—*Chamathkara-chandrika*.

This explains why Valmeeki should select the word *Thapas* out of the many that convey the idea of Brahman ; he could not have begun the life-record of Sree Rama with a better word. There is also an implied injunction to all aspirants for divine knowledge, that they should take Valmeeki as their Ideal and that they should seek a Teacher after the model of Narada."—*Go*.

27. *Lives there among men* :—The great sages have taught us that, in the far past and in other worlds, there have been personages answering to the description.—*Go*.

28. *Every excellent quality* :—Practical Omniscience and Omnipotence ; containing everything in himself (Bala); supreme rulership over all (Aiswarya); ever remaining unmodified, though, in himself, he is the material cause of the Universe (Veerya); unfailing will and purpose; freedom from sin, decrepitude, death, sorrow, hunger, thirst and similar material defects ; supreme splendour, patience, compassion, love, purity, truth, and beneficence.

P. 2-1. Weapons :—Vide *V. R. I*, 27-28.

5. *The Smrithis* :—The Manu Swayambhuva and the other great souls revolved in their minds the teachings of the Vedas and deduced from them rules for every-day life and conduct; hence, the word *Smrithi* (*Smri*, to remember). They are eighteen in number and are associated with the names of Manu, Vishnu, Yama, Angiras, Vasishtha, Daksha, Samvartha, Sathathapa, Parasara, Apasthamba, Usanas, Kathayana, Brihaspathi, Gauthama, San-kha, Likhitha, Hareetha and Athri—*Bharishiya-purana*. I, i. *Yagnyavalkya-smrithi* adds Vyasa and Yagnyavalkya to the above. *Smrithi-rathna* substitutes Yogeeswara and Prache-thas for Vasishtha and Kathayana among the eighteen. *Angiras Smrithi* enumerates Jabali, Nachikethas, Skanda, Lokashi, Kasyapa, Vyasa, Sanath-kumara, Santhi-nu, Janaka, Vyaghra, Kathayana, Jathukarni, Kapinjala, Bodhayana, Kanada, Viswamithra, Paitheenasi and Gobhila as the author of the eighteen Upa-smrithis (Minor Codes). The *Jabala Smrithi*, the *Apasthamba Smrithi*, the *Meemamsa Sastra* and the *Skanda-purana* (Sootha-Samhitha, Sivamahathmya-khanda I, i) explain with one voice that no Smrithi is authoritative, if it is not in perfect consonance with the teachings of the Vedas ; while, the Yajur Veda (Kanda II, Prasna II, Anuvaka 10) and the Brihaspathi Smrithi declare, “Of these, Manu Smrithi is the most excellent. The other Codes that go against it are not in the least authoritative.”

6. *Bears not in mind* :—He magnifies the least service rendered to him at any time and anyhow and delights in it. He has no memory for any evil that others might do him, countless though they be.—*V. R. II*, 2.

12. *Peril and distress* :—The study of the Vedas, the performance of sacrifices and the giving of charity are prescribed for the Kshathriya as the natural duties of his caste, as also rulership. But, when, in times of peril and

distress, he cannot maintain himself thus nor could make a living by agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade, he might buy and sell juices and essences ; but, never should he dream of usurping the duties of the higher caste—*Manu-smrithi*.

“ Seetha ! It would not grieve me in the least, if I had to sacrifice yourself or Lakshmana or my life ; but, never shall I go back upon my word. Further, my promise to a Brahmana is as sacred to me as the commands of the Holy Writ”—*V. R. III*, 10.

17. *The Real and the Unreal* :—Brahman is the soul of all. The Universe, as apart from It, is unreal. Brahman is the only Reality.

22. *Mind* :—Thought, memory, reason and egoism are, in general, the functions of the Anthakharana. When it is directed outward towards the objects of the senses, it is called *Manas* ; when it rests upon the Past and the Future and tries to link them together, it is *Chihiltha* ; when it deduces certain conclusions from the materials placed before it by the *Manas*, it is *Buddhi* ; and when the consciousness of I pervades it, it is *Ahamkara*.—*Sacerakopanishad* ; *Paingalopanishad II*.

24. *Temper* :—“ His anger is ever directed at those that deserve to be punished.”—*V. R. II*, 2. Of the Trinity He is the Preserver ; and as such, anger is foreign to him. Hence it is said that “ he put on the mantle of Anger.”

26. *Charming* :—“ His beauty, his generosity and his matchless excellences rivet the eyes and the hearts of men upon him.”—*V. R. II*, 3. “ The ascetics and the hermits of Dandaka gazed with wonder and delight upon his surpassing beauty and splendour.—*V. R. III*, 1.”

29. *Men and Gods* :—“ Gods, Asuras, Kings, Vidyadhara, Gandharvas, Uragas, Siddhas, Kinnaras, Garudas, Indra—there is none that dares brave the anger of Rama,

with the might of Maha-vishnu in him, at any time and any where. Brahma, the Self-born, the Four-faced ; Rudra, whose three eyes reduced to ashes the Asuras of the Three Cities ; Indra, the Lord of the Celestials—dare not stand between Rama and him against whom his wrath has gone forth.”—*V. R. V.*, 51. “Of those that bear weapons, Rama am I.”—*Geetha X*, 31.

35. *All-seeing eye* :—Valmeeki is quite confident that Narada and he alone knows such a person. For, the disciple should seek the Teacher, only after he has thoroughly convinced himself of the perfect ability of the latter to impart to him the knowledge he is after.

36. *Would gladden* :—Long have I waited in grief and sorrow for one who could clear my doubts ; and your presence here puts in me an eager desire to seek it of you.

P. 3, 9. *Questioned* :—Q: Valmeeki was not sincere with Narada. Rama, Seetha and Lakshmana visited him at his hermitage in the Dandakaranya. Sumanthra tells Dasaratha (*V. R. II*, 59) that the very trees, creepers, flowers, buds and leaves did fade and languish when Rama left the capital for the dark forests. Besides, we read later on (*Ib. VI.* 130) that when Sree Rama ruled the world, no other name was in the mouths of the people. He was everywhere and his marvellous deeds were recounted by the young and the old, prince and peasant. Now, is it in the least possible for Valmeeki to have lived in the dominions of Rama and not to have heard of his wonderful adventures ? Nor is it likely that Narada should come down from the world of Brahma to inform him of it.

A :—But, we are not to understand it that way. Valmeeki knew the life and doings of Rama very well. We also read that Narada did not give an immediate reply to him ; he would, with a little thought, find him the person answering to the description. He

understood that Valmeeki's question really aimed at something else. The Vedantha-sastras enumerate various Vidyas, and speak of a Supreme Being characterised by countless perfections. Is It Maha-vishnu or any one of the other gods? Accordingly, Narada declares that he who came down on earth as Sree Rama was indeed the Supreme One, Maha-vishnu, whom the Vedas lead us to. Brahma, Rudra and others rank below Him. *Sath, Brahma, Athman* and, for the matter of that, all words are but His names. The attributes predicated by the Vedantha-sastras find perfect expression in Sree Rama alone.

10. *Excellences*:—None but Vishnu are endowed with them ; nor do any deserve the epithet of Parama-Purusha (the Supreme Person). The Sruthi "That from which Speech and Thought turned back baffled is Brahman. He who knows Its bliss has nothing to fear," indicates that all Its attributes are as illimitable as Bliss.

Not easy :—The Sruthi "It is neither Brahma nor Rudra," precludes the possibility of any other deity possessing them. Narada hints that he has understood the question right—Valmeeki desires to settle once for all, past doubt, past discussion, who the Supreme One is.

11. *Are united* :—If, as the Advaithins contend that Brahman is devoid of any attributes whatever, the expression used would have been *Aropitha*, 'imposed upon' and not, as it is in the text, *yuktha*, 'possessed of.'

With a little thought.—"I will mentally go through the Original Ramayana composed by my father, and give you a satisfactory answer." This is proof enough that Narada got his wisdom after the traditional method of initiation. Or, it may mean, "I am quite overwhelmed with the joy born of the recollection of the excellences of Sree Rama. Give me time to recover myself."

12. *Person* :—This is a hint that the Supreme Person is the subject of the question.

15. *Listen* :—No disciple is entitled to be instructed in the Science of Brahman, who has not waited upon his Teacher at least for a year. But, it does not apply to the eldest son; and Valmeeki, as the son of Bhrigu stands to Narada as his brother's son. Hence, he could claim to be initiated in the inner mysteries without the preliminary period of probation.

17. *Ikshvaku* :—*Vide V. R. I. 70.*

Q :—Why should the Lord choose the line of Ikshvaku of the many that rule the earth?

A : The king worshipped Hari for untold ages and found favour in his eyes, enough to be blessed with the image of Sree Ranganatha. Hence, the Lord has a partiality, as it were, to those born in his line.

18. *Fall short* :—You could not have but been acquainted with the superhuman acts of Sree Rama. You saw him when he was at Chithrakoota. The world resounds with his deeds of valour. He slew Thataka ; he guarded the sacrifice of Visvamithra from the Rakshasas ; he delivered Ahalya from a dreadful curse ; he broke in twain the Bow of Siva ; he shattered the pride and haughtiness of Parasu-rama ; his single arrow pierced the seven Sala trees ; he laid low the redoubtable Vali ; he threw a bridge across the pathless ocean ; he wiped off from the face of the earth the terrible hosts of Ravana.

19. *Self* :—These are the attributes that illuminate his divine nature. "Age has no power over his physical vesture nor change, nor death. Sin, sorrow, hunger, thirst and the other material defects know him not."—*Sruthi*.

Prowess :—"Unthinkable is His might and wisdom, supreme and infinitely varied."—*Sruthi*.

20. *Splendour* :—He shines in his own light. He is Infinite Consciousness.

21. *Serene* :—“Brahman is Bliss.”—*Sruthi*.

22. *Intellect*:—Here begins the enumeration of the attributes of the Lord that are utilised in the evolution of the universe. “He who knows everything in general and in detail.”—*Sruthi*.

23. *Kingcraft* :—“Brahma evolved the universe through his knowledge of the past”; “He is what keeps back the waves of Time and Change; He is the substratum of all.”—*Sruthi*.

The Science of Polity was first given to the world by Brahma in a work of 100,000 chapters. Siva learnt it of him, and condensed it into a work *Vaisalakshya* of 10,000 chapters. Indra learnt it of him, and condensed it into a work *Bahudandaka* of 5,000 chapters. Brihaspathi abridged it further into a work *Barhaspathya* of 3,000 chapters ; and Sukra epitomised the same into a work of 1,000 chapters.—*M. B. Santhi Parva* 59 ; *Sukra-neethi*. I. But, the *Neethi-prakasika*, (31) gives the following figures: Brahma, 100,000 chapters ; Rudra, 50,000 ; Subrahmanyā, 25,000 ; Indra, 12,000 ; Manu, 6,000 ; Brihaspathi, 3,000 ; Sukra, 1,000 ; Bharadwaja ; 700, Gaurasiras, 500 ; Vedavyasa, 300. At present, the *Sukra-nithi-sara*, the *Chanakya neethi*, the *Kamandakeeya-neethisara*, the *Vidura-neethi*, the *Dhaumya-neethi*, *Manu-smriti*, *Panchathantra*, *Hithopadesa* and the *Raja-dharma* of the *Anusasanika-parva* are the only works extant on the subject.

24. *Speech* :—The Sruthi “He who evolved Brahma before the universe came into being, He who imparted unto him the Vedas,” declares that the holy books were given out to men by the Lord.

25. *Lovely* :—This might also be construed to mean that he is the Lord of the Logoic spheres and also

the material ones. "He pervades the entire universe and extends ten inches beyond".—*Sruthi*.

26. *Enemies*.—"He is the Lord of all beings. He is their protector"—*Sruthi*.

27. *Broad* :—The following is a material description of the divine form hinted at in the Sruthi :—"The Person who is seen in the midst of the solar orb, golden in hue to the tip of his toe-nails, with golden hair, beard and whiskers; His eyes are lovely as the petals of the red lotus awaking to the touch of the first rays of the sun." For further particulars, *vide V. R. V. 35.*

P. 4, 14. *Champion*.—Here follows his attributes that are utilised in the protection of those that take refuge in him. "Never do I close my heart against any that seek refuge of me. He may have 'a single virtue linked to a thousand crimes'; but, none the less, is he an object of solicitude to the compassionate. It is enough if one seeks my shelter even once; it is enough if he says, 'I throw myself upon your protection; save me from my enemies.' Right then and there I vow that he shall have nought to fear from all beings. This is my life-work; this is the vow that I live to accomplish".—*V. R. VI. 18.*

16. *Fame* :—"Unbounded Fame is his name"—*Sruthi*.

19. *Meditation* :—"With my permission you shall rise to spheres higher than those to which the Knowers of Brahman are entitled." No other has the power to say the above.

30. *Wealth* :—Maha-lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth and Prosperity, ever has her home on his breast.

P. 5. 4. *Friends* :—"I am the same to all beings. No one is the object of my love or hate" says Sree Krishna in the Geetha. The Almighty Father has no enemies, no prejudices, and no partiality.—*Thilaka*.

5. *Highest good* :—Generally emperors protect those who depend upon them and over whom they rule; but, Rama is the protector of all. Some reserve their bright side to their subjects and persecute their kinsmen, unrelentingly whom they suspect of standing between themselves and power. But, Rama “is the humble servant of his kin. He would share with them his joys and keep his sorrows to himself. He has no eye to their imperfections.” In the words of the Geetha, “he comes down upon earth during every cycle to humble the wicked, to exalt the righteous and restore Law and Order.”

8. *Warfare* :—There are four Upa-vedas (supplements). The *Ayur-veda* deals with the constitution of the physical body, the diseases that flesh is heir to, and the remedies thereof. Vahata, Charaka, and Susrutha are the recognised writers on the subject. The *Dhanur-veda* instructs the warrior in physical culture, in the use of weapons, human and divine and in the art of warfare. The standard works on the subject are lost to us except some chapters in the Agnipurana, and some isolated passages in the works on Polity. The *Gandharva-veda*—the science of Music and Gesticulation—enables us to recite with accuracy the Vedic manthras and to sing the glories of the Lord. The *Arthaveda* instructs us in the acquisition of wealth by fair and proper means and in the right use of it.

25. *Attracted* :—Except during the hours he devotes to the practice of weapons and physical culture, Rama is ever to be found in the company of men grown old in wisdom or in experience or in right conduct.—*V. R. II, 1.* His children have always free access to the Lord. No rules, no etiquette, no ceremony, no guards, no hours and no restraint where he is concerned.—*Thilaka.*

35. *Every* :—The archer turns away, not because

the sky affords no space for his arrows, but because his quiver is empty. Countless are the perfections of the Lord ; but, our limited faculties recoil in utter powerlessness to describe them. Even Valmeeki has to confess it,

Kausalya :—Why not say ‘the son of Dasaratha’? It was *she* who was thrice-blessed to come into contact with the Lord first ; she bore him in her womb ; she was ever with him in his infancy, in his childhood, in his boyhood and in his youth ; Dasaratha was not so fortunate. To her alone it was given to furnish a fit vehicle for the coming down of the Lord of all the worlds.

36. The poet reviews the material embodiments in the universe of the highest virtues and asserts that Rama summed up in himself their manifold excellences.

Deep :—All through his incarnation, he was ever careful to preserve his assumed character of a man ; and even when the high gods recount his divine attributes, he says all innocently “I am at a loss to make out what you are speaking about. I verily believe that I am a human being like any of my friends here.”—*V. R. VI. 119.*

6. *Unshaken* :—“The dark clouds vent their fury upon the lofty mountain tops, but fail to make any impression upon them. Those who have centred their heart and soul in the Lord are entirely beyond the range of care and anxiety, sorrow and grief.”—*Bh.*

8. *Wrath* :—Entirely oblivious to anything that might be done to *him*, he is quick to perceive and to resent the slightest harm done to those that have sought his protection.

11. *Giver* :—*O.* The Lord of Wealth was never known as a great giver ; he is only the guardian-deity thereof. The poet might have chosen the Cow of Plenty, the Kalpaka tree, or the Chinthamani gem to compare Rama with,

A :—He, whose favour gained confers unbounded riches, is certainly higher than the giver thereof. Rama was both in himself. He need not give ; enough if he turns a gracious eye on the suppliant.

13. The Vedantha characterises Brahman as the cause of the universe, as Omniscient, Omnipotent, and as the Inner Ruler in all. Now, did It take birth as Sree Rama ? Or is he an incarnation of the minor powers Brahma, Rudra, and the like? Narada once for all settles it that Rama is the Supreme One whom the Vedas speak of, since he is blessed with all perfections.

Q:—The Vedas reveal to us the nature and the attributes of Brahman ; but, they also instruct us in the Means and the Goal. Valmeeki never desired to know the latter ; nor did Narada volunteer to speak of them.

A :—The word *Pari-paprachcha* is not to be understood to mean only *questioned* ; Valmeeki's question was comprehensive in the extreme. It took in the Brahman, the Goal, the Means, the Obstacles and the Aspirant. And Narada has conscientiously replied to each point. ‘Rama is ever set upon doing good, the highest good to all beings ; now, that is the Means ; go thou and do likewise. “ You can never have enough of looking at him, so lovely a sight is he to see. You may look at him ever so often ; but, every time you find in him something that surprises you, a new beauty, a new charm.” Now, that is the Goal—ever to revel in the joy of the Supreme Presence, and to bask in the sunshine of His grace.

Q:—If Brahman, which is absolute and eternal Purity, be the Means and the Goal, then, every one of us should reach It.

A :—Nay, the remark applies only to him who is fully qualified to utilise the Means and to stand in Its presence, Intense burning desire to serve the Lord

and to be one of the Elect, is the first and foremost qualification, coupled with the utter avoiding of other plausible means.

Q:—You said that the Ramayana was intended to simplify and to supplement the abstruse teachings of the Vedas. Now, Dharama or the Rules of Life forms an equally important portion thereof. Then, why does it not find a place in the answer of Narada ? Besides, what comes next to the elucidation of the Vedanthic aspect of the above ?

A :—The infinite excellences of Rama reveal themselves to us through his relations with others. Further, the poet inculcates many important rules of life and conduct, general and particular, by the acts and words of the other characters in his poem.

Q :—But, how can we take it that the prominent incidents in the Balakanda are referred to here ?

A :—His divine incarnation is hinted at in the expression ‘of the godly line of Ikshvaku’. ‘His prowess is unequalled,’ is what you can deduce from his victory over Thataka, Subahu, Mareecha, and the like. ‘He is a past-master in the science and art of warfare and in the use and mastery of weapons, human and divine’—this alludes to his pupilage under Visvamithra and to his receiving from him the divine weapons. ‘One has but to come within the range of his benign glance, nay, to seek him in earnest thought, to have his heart’s wishes realized to their utmost in this world or the next ;’ Rama’s marriage with Seetha, the Goddess of Wealth and Prosperity, could alone account for his power to do so.

The poet now takes up the story of the Ayodhya-kanda.

14. *Set his heart upon* :—The giver was Dasaratha ‘whose war-chariot rolled unimpeded in all directions above and below’; no one coerced him into giving his kingdom to

Rama ; he gave only that which descended to him by right of birth; hence, the giver was fully and supremely qualified to do so. Nor was the recipient less so. As the eldest son, the kingdom was his by right of birth ; he was amply fitted to take upon himself the government of the earth—physically, mentally, morally and spiritually. He was the benefactor of his people, their idol, their darling, even before he was chosen to be their king ; they could desire no more valiant protector. Dasaratha's heart, the counsels of his ministers and the prayers of his people, all pointed out to Rama. Hence, it is broadly hinted at by the poet that Dasaratha was extremely wrong in taking the kingdom back from Rama to whom he had promised it.

P. 7. 17. *Rohini* :—Daksha, the Progenitor, had twenty-seven daughters whom he bestowed in marriage upon *Soma*, the Moon-God. But, he was drawn most to Rohini, and shamefully neglected her sisters. Tears, prayers and anger were utterly unavailing. As a last resort, they complained of his behaviour to Daksha. Soma was taken to task by his father-in-law and repeatedly adjured to treat all his wives alike. But, he could not be weaned away from his old ways. Daksha, tired of it, cursed him with consumption. Soma tried to shake it off by every means in his power—sacrifices, expiations, ablutions, incantations and oblations ; but all in vain. Now, he was the presiding deity of trees, shrubs, plants, creepers, and medicinal herbs. As he waned away, they faded, withered and died. In consequence, those that fed upon them grew languid and weak.

One day Soma was questioned by the gods upon his evident loss of energy and brightness ; and he related unto them what Daksha's righteous indignation had done for him. Then they repaired unto Daksha and said “Reverend Sir ! Take pity on poor Soma and recall your

curse. You have no idea of what he looks now ; he is but a shadow of his former self. But, that is not the worst of it. His illness has correspondingly affected the well-being of that kingdom of Nature over which he rules. The vegetable creation turns to him for life and energy ; animals and men depend upon the vegetable kingdom for sustenance ; and we depend upon men to give us life, strength and energy; and the three words depend upon us for guidance and rule. You know it as well as we, if not better. All the more reason why you should forgive your son-in-law." "But," said Daksha, "my word has gone forth and cannot be recalled, Let him look to it that he treats my girls fairly, at least from to-day; and I will see if I cannot relieve him a bit. Advise him to bathe in the Sarasvathi-theertha for a time and keep the necessary observances. That will restore him to health, But, he will wax during one half of the month and wane during the other half, He cannot escape *that*." Then, Soma followed the instructions of Daksha ; and his health, energy and brightness came back to him. He proceeded to thank his father-in-law for his kindness and the gods went with him. Daksha was glad to see him well and said, "I hope you will have a happier home hereafter. It would not do for you to trifle with me or with mine." Everafter, Soma bathes in the waters of the Prabhasa-theerthha and regains his beauty and energy.—*M. B. Salya Parva. 35; Ib. Santhi Parva, 343; Padma Purana, Swarga-khanda, II.*

P. 9. 10. Here begins the story of the Aranya-kanda.

18. *Brother* :—*The Markandeya-purana* calls him Agasthya. One day, he cursed his mates who chanced to offend him while he was engaged in the congenial occupation of gathering roots, flowers and herbs.—*Thilaka*. But, there is another version of it which gives him the name of *Idhmavaha*.

P. 11, 14. Here begins the summary of the Kishkindha-kanda.

P. 12, 24. Here begins the Sundara-kanda.

P. 13, 18. Here begins the story of the Yuddha-kanda.

P. 14, 27. Here begins the Uththara-kanda.

P. 15, 26. *The world of gods* :—It is absurd to say that he who has freed himself from all sin should reach only the world of gods, if but Swarga is meant by it. It is more reasonable to take it that he has a place in the highest heavens where Vishnu rules, even “the Swargaloka surrounded by the Lights and girt with a golden wall,” as the Sruthi has it.

Welcome guest :—“ Five hundred Apsarasas come forth to greet him with garlands and perfumes.”—*Kaushic-thaki Upanishad*.

32, *Soodra* :—The Smrithi has it that the Kshathriyas, the Vaisyas and the Soodras should listen to the Ithihasas and the Puranas expounded by a Brahmana. All the more, a Soodra is not allowed to read them. But, since the word *read* is used in connexion with him, we can safely conclude that he is permitted to read this Summary of the Ramayana.

i. The Gayathri-manthra is an exposition of the nature of Brahman ; and he who meditates upon it is raised to the world of Brahma. Then, it goes without saying that the Ramayana, which is but an amplification of the inner meaning of the Gayathri, secures the same results. The Manthra is confined only to the Brahmanas, the Kshathriyas and the Vaisyas ; and the restriction applies equally well to the Ramayana. Women and the Soodras should listen to it only when expounded by a Brahmana ; but, they are not qualified to *read* it.—*Thilaka*.

ii. The twenty-four thousand stanzas begin each with a letter of the Gayathri. The first chapter is a summary

of the Epic. And as such, it begins with *Tha* and ends with *Th*—the first and the last letters of the Manthra.

iii. Some hold that the summary and the next three chapters were composed by some disciple of Valmeeki or by a later poet. But the A. R (Yathra-kanda II) has it that “the Original Ramayana, as represented in the Bharatha-varsha by the portion allotted to it by Vishnu, would gradually fade away from the hearts of men. Long after, Veda-vyasa would turn his attention to it ; 24,000 stanzas would be the utmost that he could save from the wreck ; he will supply the introduction, the epilogue and the opening salutation and hand down to posterity a complete work in seven cantos.” From this we can safely infer that Vyasa was the author of all the stanzas over and above the 24,000.

P. 16. 1. It is an old dictum that the wise love to narrate events in detail and in brief. Valmeeki gave, in the first chapter of his epic, a summary of it ; and now he proceeds to relate, before he begins the poem itself, the events that led to his composition of it, a brief recital of the prominent incidents treated of, as also how the message was carried to the homes and hearts of men. The author of an epic must be able to see for himself the incidents as they occurred and give to the world a life-like description of them. Valmeeki stands unrivalled in that respect, thanks to the powers conferred on him by Brahma.

2. *Righteousness* :—He knew better than any the respect and reverence owe to the Teacher.

6. *Marvellously* :—Speech should be free from the nine verbal defects and the nine defects of judgment. It should set forth very clearly the meaning intended ; it should possess the following eighteen merits. Saukshmya (ambiguity or minuteness), Sankhya (ascertaining the faults and merits of premises and conclusions), Krama (weighing the relative strength or weakness of the above),

Nirnaya (establishment of the conclusion), and Prayojana (the element of persuasiveness or otherwise attaching to the conclusion thus arrived at)—go to make speech authoritative.

When the objects to be known differ from one another; when the knowledge thereof depends on the distinction between them ; when, to grasp the subject, it is necessary for the mind to rest upon many points one after another, such a passage is said to be vitiated by Saukshmya or ambiguity. (To take an instance, the passage in the Parasara-smrithi that has been understood to sanction the re-marriage of Hindu widows, contains words, each of which is employed in various senses ; the objects indicated by those words are also many. You cannot have a clear and correct knowledge of the meaning of each word, except by distinguishing each from every other. Then, the intellect deals with the various points one after another and arrives at the true meaning by a process of selection and elimination. If a passage requires to be understood that way, it is said to be vitiated with the fault of over minuteness). The Sankhya leads us to adopt tentative meanings. (Supposing that Parasara advocated the re-marriage of widows, we find that several words in the passage support him, while others do not. After duly weighing the reasons and probabilities, we tentatively adopt the meaning that Parasara allowed the Hindu widow to marry again). Krama settles the order of the words employed in a sentence—which should come before and which after. Nirnaya is the final determination in respect of what it particularly is that has been treated of in the text, after critically examining what has been said on the Aims of life. (Now, we should either accept or reject our tentative meaning. We see that it does not fit in with other settled conclusions arrived at by authoritative writers. There are more reasons for rejecting it than for

adopting it. Hence, widows may take a husband, not by marriage, but according to the Niyoga injunction). Prayojana is the course of action or conduct that one adopts for removing the pain generated by an ungratified wish, to enjoy pleasure or avoid pain. No one can claim that his speech is complete and intelligible who has not properly attended to the above. (The Nyaya school calls them Prathignya, Hethu, Udaharana, Upanaya, and Nigamana. The Meemamsa philosophy names them Vishaya, Samsaya, Poorvapaksha, Uththara and Siddhantha).

The words should be full of sense, free from ambiguity, logical and without repetition ; they should be smooth, certain, free from bombast, agreeable, truthful and consistent with the Purusharthas ; they should be refined (free from vulgarism, solecisms, dialectisms and slang); they should not be elliptical or marred by harshness or darkness; they should be arranged in due order and their meanings should not be far-fetched ; they should have a logical connexion with one another as cause and effect ; and every one of them should denote a specific object and no other. (For further details see *Sarasvathi-kanthabharana* of Bhoja Deva).

Speech should not be prompted by desire or wrath or fear. It should not be the expression of cupidity or pride or shame or meanness or compassion. The sense of a speech is clear when the speaker, the listener and the words are thoroughly in agreement with one another ; but, when the speaker uses words understood by himself alone or when he attaches to them a meaning different from what his hearer does, it is hopeless for the latter to try to comprehend; when he uses words excellent in themselves, but have no clear connexion with the ideas he wants to express nor the objects he desires to denote, the listener carries away but a very imperfect or wrong impression of it. (Clearly think

out what you want to say ; and select such words as clearly and completely convey your thoughts to the auditors.)—*M. B. Santhi Parva*, 320.

13. *Heavenly spheres* :—To report to Brahma the success of his mission.

18. *Thamasa* :—Now *Tons*. It falls into the Ganges near Allahabad.

17. 32. *Curse* :—The Teachers of old have decided that the first words that fell unconscious from the lips of Valmeeki could never have been a curse, but a devout blessing and prayer. As it stands in the text, it reads.

Ma, nishada ! parthishtham twam agamah sasvateeh samah ; yath kraunchamithunath ekam avadheeh kama-mohitam. Or, in prose :—

Nishada ! kraunchamithunath kamamolutham ekam-yath avadheeh, thwam sasvathieeh samah prathishtham-agamah. But *ma* instead of forming a negative prefix to *agamah* might be taken as the first of the compound *Manishada*. Then, it means—“ Lord of Lakshmi ! May your greatness and glory never grow less. Out of the Rakshasa couple (Ravana and his wife Mandodari), your keen arrow found its way to the heart of one (Ravana) who, mad with unholy love, carried away Seetha.”

In truth, this stanza contains the opening salutation to the deity whom the author pays adoration to. Further, it satisfies the rules of poetical art, that the opening stanza of the work should contain, as in a germ, the prominent incidents of the plot. ‘Lord of Lakshmi’ alludes to Rama’s marriage with Seetha, the main incident of the Bala-kanda. ‘May your greatness and glory be never less’ refers to the greatness and glory obtained by Rama through his perfect carrying out of the commands of his father. ‘Never’ points to the undying fame reaped by him in that he fulfilled his promise to the sages of

Dandakaranya—the main story of the Aranya-kanda. Out of the two monkeys (Krauncha) Vali and Thara, Rama slew Vali, who took away, all unlawfully, Ruma, the wife of Sugreeva,—the central incident of the Kishkindhakanda. The same expression—*krauncha mithunath kamamolitham ekam*—might be understood to refer to the grief of Seetha, who, with her husband Rama, was worn out (krauncha) with the grief of long separation—the central topic of Sundarakanda. The story of the Yuddha-kanda might be read into the same to denote the death of Ravana, the Rakshasa (krauncha), whom unholy love and lust separated for ever from the side of his wife Mandodari; and ‘*Kamamolitham*’ may also apply to Seetha’s desire to visit the wives of the Rishis in the Dandakaranya, which was taken advantage of by Rama to send her away from Ayodhya—practically the most important episode of the Uththara-kanda.

Q:—Sree Rama himself has laid down the rules of hunting in his reply to Vali—“ It is not unlawful to slay beasts and birds for the sake of their flesh. They may be careful or careless, prepared or unprepared, aware or unaware of our approach.” Then, was it just and proper of Valmeeki, who knew very well the habits and usages of the hunters, to launch a dreadful curse upon the poor hunter for pursuing his legitimate calling ?

A :—The point of the crime lay not in the act itself, but in the occasion. Rishi Kindama cursed Pandu for a similar offence. “ Born of the line of Bharatha, you ought to avoid, more than others, an act that bars your way to fame and heaven. No one in his senses, not even the most careless, would ever bring himself to slay creatures in the embraces of love.”

[The stanzas in this chapter dealing with the Fowler and his crime are interpreted to refer to the incidents connected with Ravana; hence the title ‘The Fall

of Ravana, given by the Poet to this poem. Others point out to an equally valid title ‘Seetha-charitha’ (The Life of Seetha) and interpret the very same passages so as to support their contention. The discussion turns upon the various meanings of the words employed and quaint etymological concert and would not interest the average reader].

Q.—It is a fact that the fowler slew the bird; and no less so that Valmeeki cursed him. This is the meaning patent. But, it also alludes to the central episode of the epic and is a devout blessing upon all beings. For, it might be explained thus :—“Ravana ! The three worlds were groaning under your iron heel. Rama and Seetha left behind them their power, their pomp, their luxury and their comforts to lead the life of exiles. You made their hearts heavier by subjecting Seetha to a grief that was worse than death. The marvellous boons you got from Brahma shall no more have power to save you. Your kingdom, your wealth, your strength, your might, your kin, your subjects, and your army shall go down into oblivion.” The Goddess of Speech is said to have spoken through the lips of Valmeeki and the above words are eminently characteristic of that embodiment of wisdom and truth.—*Kathaka*.

But, Valmeeki met Narada only after Rama had come back to Ayodhya from his wars with Ravana. It seems absurd that Sarasvathi should say of an event, ‘Let it be so’ when it is already a thing of the past. You don’t bless a man with what he already has. Further, Theertha, the commentator, maintains that the poet has epitomised his epic in this opening stanza. Then, Valmeeki’s words—“Passing strange ! How came I, of subdued passions and serene heart, to speak words of such dread import ?”—are meaningless in the extreme.

A.—He might have been in doubt as to whether the words were prose or poetry.

Q.—The Anushtup metre must have been familiar to Valmeeki in the Vedic hymns. If his conversation with Naráda had been in stanzas of that metre, he should have entertained the doubt *then* and not later on,

A.—The talk might have been in prose ; and Valmeeki might have rendered it into poetry after the composition of the stanza ‘Manishada’.

Q.—You have no premises to go upon.

A.—In fact, it is exactly the other way. Valmeeki’s anger was roused at the sight of the fowler’s heartless cruelty. Nobody would expect any prayer or blessing or profound reflections from him at that time. Rama, his adventures and any record of them, were then the farthest from his thoughts ; and it was Brahma that put the idea into his mind and gave him the necessary facilities. Hence, I believe that Sree Rama appeared before Valmeeki as a hunter and slew the bird Ravana before his very eyes ; Rama knew that Valmeeki had heard from Narada of his deeds and glory ; he knew that the sage wanted to convey the Gospel he had received to all men. Pathos and compassion play a prominent part in the incidents of his career ; and no one can do justice to it but he must have sounded its utmost depths. Further, he wanted Valmeeki the descendent of Bhrigu, to pronounce again the curse that his ancestor had launched against Mahavishnu ; and the sage must be witness to it and to its effects. So, he caused him to conclude that the hunter had perpetrated a very wicked act ; and in his anger, the curse was spoken anew. The hunter slays birds and beasts for food ; he has no grudge against them nor any revenge to take. But, the Rakshasas are the eternal foes of the Lord, in that, they try to upset his Law.

Q.—What is the basis of this new interpretation ?

A.—The inner current of meaning that runs through

the whole poem. Our developed intuition is a more convincing and safer guide in these respects than books or opinions. It is not an ordinary epic that Valmeeki sang. It is a record of macrocosmic processes reflected of course in the microcosm. Rama, Ravana, Seetha, Valmeeki and others are eternal symbols ; not of one age or of one land.

The *Padma-purana*, in describing the greatness of Rama, has the following passage. "Then, Rama came to know that a wood-cutter passed some cruel remarks upon his wife's character and incidentally compared her to Seetha in the house of Ravana. He called Lakshmana to his side and said "I shall take advantage of this lucky coincidence to put away Seetha from me. Nay, the curse of Bhrigu must be worked out, especially when it is reiterated by his descendant, Valmeeki". The *Skanda-purana*, (*Pathala-khanda, Ayodhyamahathmya*), tells us that Brahma came to Valmeeki, when he was in great grief about the curse that escaped his lips and said, "The cruel hunter is no other than Sree Rama. You will win eternal fame by singing his marvellous deeds of valour." *The Yoga-vasishtha* in enumerating the causes that led to the coming down of the lord as Sree Rama, says "He wanted to perpetuate on earth, the story of his life and doings. Accordingly, he appeared before Valmeeki as a fowler and slew in his sight a bird who was no other than Ravana. Valmeeki cursed him for it ; and his purpose accomplished the Lord vanished before his eyes. The Rishi was seized with remorse for what he had done and was only consoled by Brahma, who came down to him and acquainted him with the true aspect of the affair.—*Thilaka*.

P. 18. 1. *Misgiving* :—The Inner Ruler caused him to see that the fowler was in reality greater and nobler than any other man on earth ; there was something in him that unconsciously compelled Valmeeki's reverence and ad-

miration. The bird that formed till then the object of his pity appeared to him in a new light, as richly deserving its fate ; it was vile and wicked beyond conception. In his desire to censure an apparent wrong, he had unconsciously committed an act extremely sinful, and unspeakably infamous. These were so many intuitive flashes which he felt must be true, but could not reason out.

P. 19. Bath :—For details the reader is referred to the *Parasara-smrithi*. Rivers, lakes, and wells within the temple precincts and holy theerthas should be resorted to. The earth beneath the sacred trees, such as Bilva and Aswatha, should be applied before the first bath to various parts of the body. Then, the same process is to be gone through with cow-dung. Next follows the Achamana (sipping of water) and the bath proper, accompanied by the recitation of the vedic hymns in praise of Varuna. The Waters form the resting place of the Lord ; that is reason enough for us to meditate upon him during the bath. Standing in the water, we should utter the sacred word thrice, with eyes turned towards the Lord of Light and offer libations of water to the sun as the visible symbol of life, light and wisdom.

31. *Came* :—Brahma paid a similar visit to Vyasa on the occasion of his composing the Maha-bharatha. Vyasa offered him due respect and told him that he had composed the Maha-bharatha. The Four-faced One gave him his blessing and directed him to secure Ganapathi to write it out.—*M. B. Adi-parva I.*

36. *Reasons* :—May be he wanted to have a sight of Valmeeki whom Narada praised so highly.—*Go.*

P. 19. 3. To welcome :—When a senior in age, learning and holiness approaches a younger man than himself, the latter should get up and offer him reverence. But, if he defiantly or in ignorance sits on, his life-breaths go out from

his body ; they come back only after he had reverently saluted his elders. He, who makes it a point to pay reverence to elders every day and walks in their ways, never grows less in learning, fame or energy. When saluting others, we should announce our clan, family, Soothra (particular school of ritual), Veda and last our name. (The usual formula runs thus : Abhivadaye—Pravaranvithah—Gothrah—Soothrah—Sakhadhyayi--Sarma-nāma aham, asmi bhoh ! “Sir I am—by name ;—are the Rishis of my clan ;—is the ancestral Rishi of my family ; I belong to the—school of ritual ; I study the—Veda ; I salute you ”). He should touch the ground with the eight parts of his body, and repeat the above formula with his head reverently bent towards the other and his ears closed with the finger tips, after which, he should touch the feet of the elder. In his turn, the latter should reply “Ayushman Bhava—sarma, May you live long —Sarma” (the last vowel being drawn out). He who knows not to bless as above is verily a Soodra. It is enough if we salute him as we do women, by giving out only our name. After the blessing follows the enquiry about the welfare ; the words *Kusala*, *Anamaya*, and *Sukha* are to be used respectively with regard to the Brahmana, the Kshathriya and the Vaisya. One who has consecrated himself to the performance of a sacrifice should be addressed as ‘O, Reverend sir’, though he be younger in years. The wives of others and women not related to him, should be respectfully addressed as ‘Madam ! sister ! Auspicious one !!’ An uncle, a father-in-law and a sacrificial priest should be honoured by getting up and *Abhivadana* (formal salutation). The mother’s sister, the aunt, the mother-in-law, and the father’s sister are to be treated with the same respect as the wife of the Preceptor. The wife of the elder brother should be saluted every day if she

belongs to the same caste. The wives of the cognates and relations by marriage should be saluted only when they come back after a journey. Parents' sisters should be treated as the mother. But, a Soodra past ninety should be respected by all. We should step aside to make way for him that comes on a conveyance, for one over ninety years, for one in weak health or suffering from disease, for carriers of loads, women, kings, bridal-parties and Brahmanas of rigid observances. But, of these, the king and the Brahmana should be given preference ; and of the two, the Brahmana should be first given consideration.—*Manu-smrithi*, II.

It is against the Smrithis that Brahma should use the word *Anamaya* in making enquiries after Valmeeki's welfare—*Thilaka*.

24. *My direction* :—As one of the Trinity, he can well speak out for Maha-vishnu, who, as Rama, desired that his life and deeds should be recorded on earth.

Q.:—What were his motives in doing so ?

A.:—A Brahmana's curse would make even the Lord of Serenity to experience the sorrows of separation from the beloved object—a thing legitimate only in those under the sway of Karma ; this reveals to us the inconceivable might of a Brahmana. Besides, he wanted to show to the world by his own example that it is better to rule one's kingdom]within than to be invested with material power without while all the time remaining the slave of his lower Self. Again, it was a fit expiation for the unconscious sin of Valmeeki that he should sing the glory of the Lord. It endowed him with immortal fame. Lastly, if the Ramayana has power to free Valmeeki from a sin committed against the Lord himself, it goes without saying that it destroys root and branch the Tree of Sin growing in the hearts of those that recite or listen to it.—*Thilaka*.

29. *Nobler subject* :—The fall of Ravana brought

peace and joy to the worlds ; the fall of the bird you deplore is likewise bound to bring life, light and happiness to many a soul on earth now and ever.

31. *Hero* :—The attributes enumerated are in effect the same as the characteristics required of a perfect hero. (vide Introduction, pp. 20 and 21.)

Valmeeki launched his curse upon the fowler, but in reality against Sree Rama. The expiations prescribed by the Smrithis do not apply to this case. The narration of the life and deeds of Him who was thus cursed might alone expiate the sin.—*Thilaka*.

34. Brahma proceeds to endow him not only with the power of clear vision, but also of clearly and truly expressing the same.

P. 20. 5 to 11. Immortal fame on earth and eternal life in the highest heavens is the meed of him who sings the perfect epic.

21. *Such verses* :—Where pathos rules supreme.—*Thilaka*.

30. *Lislen* :—These words were probably addressed to the disciples of Valmeeki by Kusa and Lava who were the first to sing the poem.

Noble Pœm :—The various metres introduced—Upajathi, Vasantha-thilaka, Vamsastha and the like—are admirably suited to the emotions depicted ; Draksha-paka is the mode of composition adopted ; the Saiyya is of the best ; and the style used is Vaidarbhi, the most attractive.

31. *The Fall of Ravana* :—Some hold that the first six kandas alone are authoritative and form the real epic to which such wonderful results are attributed. The Hari-vamsa in the Maha-bharatha and the Uththara-kanda in the Rama-yana are not Pramana (are apocryphal). Valmeeki's divine vision extended only up to the time of Rama's return from his exile in the forest. But, others contend with

equal reason that the word *cha* (and) in *Dasa-sirasas-cha* denotes what befell Rama after his return to Ayodhya.

P. 21-1. The previous chapter informs the reader how Valmeeki came to possess the power of clear sight and clear speech ; and in this he praises high the subject of his poem. It must have filtered down to the author's consciousness during the hours of Samadhi (divine communion.) This takes it away from the sphere of the ordinary efforts of human intellect and lifts it into the region of Revealed books. It must be resplendent with the excellences of the perfect Hero. He proceeds to relate how he exercised his divine gift of vision, wishing to assure us that the material came to him through no ordinary medium.

9. *Sipping* :—A Brahmana may sip water connected with the Brahma-theertha (the middle joint of the thumb) or the Kaya-theertha (the last joint of the little finger) or the Deva-theertha (the space between the thumb and the fore-finger). Having first sipped thrice of the water consecrated with the appropriate manthras, he should wipe with particular finger-tips the mouth twice and the eyes, the ears, the nose, the shoulders, the chest and the head each once. The water must be neither tepid nor foaming. He should silently face the east or the north. The Brahmana should sip water that reaches as far as the chest, the Kshathriya as far as the throat, the Vaisya as far as the root of the tongue and the Soodra as far as the lips and the tongue.—*Manu-smrithi*. II.

11. *East* :—In rituals connected with the Gods they are pointed east ; when the Fathers are invoked they are pointed south.

13. *Superhuman powers* :—Every one of our thoughts, words, and acts are photographed at once in their correlative forms and colours in the great screen

of Akasa and there they remain to the end of time. The Puranas give the name of Chithra-gupta to the Energy that impresses the above on the pages of Nature's book. He is the keeper of the Akasic Records ; and reads from them the good and the evil deeds, words and thoughts of beings when they stand face to face with Yama or the Dispensor of karmic justice. (*Agni-purana* 368, 370). Modern science has come to the same conclusion. " Ether must not be merely like fluid poured into the vacant spaces and intestines of the material world and exercising no action on objects. It must affect the physical, the chemical and the vital powers of what it touches. It must be a great and active agent in the work of the universe, as well as an active reporter of what is done by other agents."—*Dr. Whewell.*

"It seems that this photographic influence pervades all nature ; nor can we say where it stops. We do not know but it may print upon the world around us our features as they are modified by various fashions ; and thus fill nature with daguerrotype impressions of all our actions. It may be too that there are tests by which nature, more skilful than any photographers, can bring out and fix these portraits, so that acuter senses than ours shall see them as upon a great canvass."—*Prof. E. Hitchcock.*

"The air is one vast library on whose pages are for ever written all that man has ever said or women whispered.'—*Prof. Babbage.*

"Every thought displaces particles of the brain, sets them in motion and scatters them through the universe ; thus, each particle of the existing matter should be a register of all that has happened."—*Prof. Jevons.*

"A shadow never falls upon a wall without leaving thereupon a permanent trace, a trace which might be made visible by resorting to proper processes. Photographic

operations are cases in point. The portraits of our friends or landscape views, may be hidden on the sensitive surface from the eye, but they are ready to make their appearance as soon as proper developers are resorted to. A spectre is concealed on a silver or glassy surface until, by our necromancy, we make it come forth into the visible world. Upon the walls of our most private apartments, where, we think, the eye of intrusion is altogether shut out and our retirement can never be profaned, there exists the vestiges of all our acts, silhouettes of whatever we have done."—*Prof. Draper's 'The conflict between Religion and Science.'*"

It is a scientific fact founded upon the law of action and reaction. There exists a mutual and reciprocal action of things upon one another. Thus, if a body falls to the earth, the latter reacts upon it and stops it or throws it back. If sulphuric acid be poured upon lime-stone, it acts upon the stone, and the latter re-acts upon the acid, thus forming a new compound. Again, if light falls upon a solid body, the body re-acts upon the light, which it sends back to the eye along with an image of itself. And from this established principle of mechanics, it follows that every impression that man makes upon ether, air, water or earth by means of his aura, whenever he acts or thinks, must produce a series of changes in each of these elements. Thus the word which leaves the mouth causes pulsations or waves in the air; and these expand in every direction. The waters retain traces of every disturbance, as for instance, where ships cross the sea; and the earth too is tenacious of every impression man makes upon it.

The emanations of aura which are thus pictured on nature are no doubt exceedingly subtle; but they are not therefore less definite or less perceptible as objects of vision than the grosser particles of matter, although it cannot be denied that, owing to the great subtlety of the

aura, it needs a very superior power of analysis to follow and discern its colours, and read the character of the actions producing the variously coloured emanations. Nevertheless, as all these phenomena are due to physical laws, their analysis must be within the reach of human beings, under certain conditions.

The science of psychometry recognises the fact that all things radiate their character upon all the surrounding objects, so that any sensitive person can see and describe them minutely. When such person—technically called a psychometer—sees any object or any substance placed before him, he comes in contact with the current of the astral light connected with that object or specimen which retains pictures of scenes and events associated with its history. But these pass before him with the swiftness of light ; scene after scene, each crowding upon the other so rapidly that it is only by a great exercise of will that he is able to hold any one scene in the field of vision long enough to describe it. Nature does not work without instruments ; nor does it violate in one department, those general laws which it follows in others. A human being must have special organs for special operations of the mind as truly as for walking or speaking ; and no vision therefore is possible without an eye and without a grade of light adapted to that eye. The question is whether man possesses such an eye and whether there is light adapted to it for the purpose of discerning the minute emanations of aura and reading the character of actions represented by them. Man *has* an another finer and quite different eye besides the two outer ones ; and Nature furnishes the light necessary for the exercise of this finer faculty. Man sees gross objects through his gross eye coming into relation with the gross rays of the sun ; and he sees subtle objects by his

subtle eye coming into relation with the subtle rays of the sun, the vehicle of light from the sun to man being in either case the universal ether, which is most subtle and most luminous.

This fact ought not to be ignored simply because ordinary people do not know that they are possessed of such a faculty as that of which we are speaking. As regards man's outer faculty of vision, let us here call to mind the well-known fact that it is not equally developed in all alike; and that it is moreover liable to be affected by various causes, such as distance and nearness, grossness and minuteness, confusion and concealments, inattention and predominance of other matter, and lastly the defect of the organ by age or disease. So that, all men do not see alike; and every day we meet people who are short-sighted, long-sighted, dim-sighted, blind, or partially blind, as in the case of colour-blindness, which scientists say is caused "by the imperfect working of a portion of the rods and cones of the retina, or from the fact that the humours of the eye may be absorptive of certain colours, and thus prevent them from passing on to the retina and the brain, so that some can only see some colours and not others." And moreover, even without any of these defects, man's vision is by nature limited to a certain range; and there are certain animals whose range of vision is naturally circumscribed within the narrow limit of a few inches, while there are others whose visual range is much wider than that of man. In these respects ophthalmoscopy and optical science have done much by compounding medicines and inventing instruments, such as spectacles, telescopes and microscopes, to improve the outward faculty of vision by removing constitutional or natural defects and limits.

While such is the state of things in the

outer temple of nature, it should be no matter of surprise that when we enter the vestibule of the *inner* temple, we there find a most subtle faculty of vision—a *third eye in fact*—which is free from all defects that belong to the outward eyes, and which unfolds to us the mysterious nature of aura, its lights and colours.

The seat of this visual faculty is the aperture, of the size of a thumb, in the internal structure of man's forehead at the base of the nose between the two eye-brows. This cavity is the reservoir of *Tejas*, which spreads itself in the body on its being fanned by the vital airs :—

“As the spreading light of a precious gem placed in a closed room collects itself in the key-hole, so the luminosity of the *sathva* (essence of the said *Tejas*) in the *hridayam* (heart) collects itself in the said aperture on the forehead; and illumines the yogi in respect of all things irrespective of nearness or distance, alike of space and time.” (*Pathanjali's Yogasoothras* pp. 163, Bom. Trans.)

This internal faculty has been called by different names with reference to its position and its properties. It is called the “light of the head” (*Moordhna-Jyothis*), “seat of immortality” (*Amritha-sthana*), “the circle between the eye-brows” (*Bhroo-chakram*), “eye on the forehead” (*Lalata-nethram* and *Phala-nethram*), ‘eye of wisdom’ (*Gnana-chakshus*), “celestial eye” (*Divya-chakshus* or *Divya-drishti*) and so on.

True, this faculty has not that elaborate organism which the eye of the body possesses, but this is not necessary. The cause of the perception of form is not the same in all. In the case of men generally, the cause is the contact of the external eye with the form by the medium of the external light ; whereas in the case of animals that roam at night and can see in the dark, the cause of perception is simply the contact of the eye with [the form, no light being

necessary at all. And the occultist needs neither the external eye nor the external light. His perception arises from the conjunction of the mind with the soul, assisted by the spiritual light, which results from such conjunction, and shows itself in the cavity of the forehead above referred to. Says Pathanjali :—

“The Yogi, disregarding all other instrumental causes, sees everything solely from *Prathibha* (*i.e.*,) the light or right knowledge instantly produced from the conjunction of the mind and soul, antecedent to the exercise of the reasoning faculty.” (*Vivcka-khyathi*).

This knowledge is technically called *Tharaka*; which (as indeed the whole subject) may be fully studied by the disciple in the Upanishads entitled the Saubhagya-lakshmi, Dhyana-bindu, Amritha-bindu, and Thripura-thapani; and in Vaisesika-nyaya-siddhantha, and Pathanjali’s *Yoga-sasthra*, Book III, Aphorism 33, etc.

The existence of this internal faculty and its powers are also mentioned incidentally in the Rig-Veda V, 42; Chandogya Upanishad VIII, 14; Mathsy-a-purana IV, 1; Niruktha I, 20; Taiththareeya Samhitha; Bhagavad-geetha XIII, 34; and in numerous places in the Maha-bharatha and Sree Bhagavatha. It is remarkable that the Prabodha-chandrodaya identifies this internal visual faculty of a Yogi with the third eye, which the deity *Rudra* is declared in various sacred works to be possessed of (vide M. B. Anusasana-parva ch. 140; Brahma-kaivartha-purana, Krishna-janmakhanda, ch. 39, etc).—From *P. Srinivasarao’s Commentary and annotations on the Light on the Path*.

Every one of our senses can be thus developed infinitely so as to take in and respond to wider and wider ranges of vibrations, either through Yogic practices or through securing the help of some Power in nature. The divine vision is but the synthesis of the powers exercised by the

various sense organs, which after all are but limited expressions of it. Veda-vyasa bestowed such a power on Sanyaya to enable him to observe what took place on the battle-field of Kurushethra and report it to the blind king Dhritharashtra. Sree Krishna conferred the same vision on Arjuna and Uddhava. "Behold, O Partha ! my form hundred-fold, thousand-fold, various in kind, in colour, in shape and divine. Behold the Adithyas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the two Aswins and also the Maruths. Behold many marvels never seen before this, O Bharatha ! Here to-day behold the whole universe movable and immovable, standing in one, in my body, O Gudakesa ! with anything else you desire to see. But, verily you are not able to behold me with these your eyes. I give you the divine Eye. Behold my sovereign Yoga."—*Geetha XI.*

31. *Aims of life* :—The epic deals with Dharma and Wealth in detail and with Pleasure but incidentally.

P. 25. 1 The last chapter extolled the excellence of the subject ; while the present deals with the unrivalled pre-eminence of the poem itself. The Singer of it is matchless for his power to see things and describe them truly ; the Poem is the life-record of that Great Person, a recital of whose deeds and glories puts away all sin and attracts everything good ; the good and the wise have expressed their unqualified approbation of it ; and last, not least, it was sung before the hero himself and praised by him in no mean terms.

6. *Diction* :—The Vaidarbhi style is the soul of the poem.

7. The enumeration of the cantos, the chapters and the stanzas is to show that it is neither too long nor too short in these respects, and to guard against future interpolation or corruption.

18. *Touched his feet*:—Prayed to be instructed in the Ramayana and its mysteries.

26. *Taught*:—Valmeeki sang this epic after the coronation of Rama; Kusa and Lava were born subsequent to it; so Rama had a purpose in directing Lakshmana, to leave Seetha near the hermitage of the Rishi.

27. *Seetha - charithra*:—The Teachers hold that the Bharatha instructs humanity in the mysteries of the Means to Salvation, while the Ramayana unveils the nature of Maha-lakshmi, the Divine Intercessor. If Rama and his glories be the sole topic of the Ramayana, how could it be that the hero listened to it with unqualified approbation? As a Dheerodaththa, it was quite against his nature to listen to praise of himself. Hence, the epic deals with the greatness and glory of Seetha. Sweet to him was the recital thereof, her noble excellences, her supreme love and devotion to himself; sweeter in that he was separated from her on earth for ever. Hence, the poem is aptly given this title.

29. *Paulasthya-vadha* :—Five are the characteristic marks of a poem—Beeja, Bindu, Pathaka, Prakari, and Karya. The coming down of the lord and his marriage to Seetha forms the *Beeja* (the gerim). The coronation of Rama would have prevented the destruction of Ravana, which the gods prayed at his hands; the measures adopted by Kaikeyee to frustrate it, and to send Rama away from the kingdom saved the situation, and forms the *Bindu* (the seed). Sugreeva's adventures form a parallel almost to those of Rama and form the *Pathaka*. The episode of Vibheeshana is similarly conducive to the accomplishment of the desired object and is the *Prakari*. The fall of Ravana and his Rakshasas constitute the *Karya* (the goal aimed at). Hence, the Ramayana regards the Life of Seetha as the main

incident ; the doings of Rama are auxiliary to it, while the fall of Ravana is the result to be achieved.

31. *Sentiment*.—The Rasas (the Tastes or Essences—literally) give one a taste for material existence ; they form the very essence of it.

Sringara (love), *Veera* (heroism), *Bheebhathsa* (disgust), *Raudra* (the terrible), *Hasya* (the humorous), *Bhayanaaka* (fear), *Karuna* (pathos), *Adbhutha* (the wonderful), and *Santha* (serenity)—analyse the birth and growth of the above emotions, describe how they affect the nature and character of men and how they think, speak and act under the circumstances. (*Karuna* deals with pity, compassion and sympathy ; *Veera*, with courage, prowess and heroism; *Raudra*, with anger and its results ; and *Santha* with the state of mind unmoved by joy or sorrow, anger or hate). The *Sakunthala*, the *Malavikagnimithra* of Kalidasa and the *Malathee-madhava* are based upon the *Sringara*; the *Karuna* is the under-current that runs through the *Uthara-rama-charithra* of Bhava-bhoothi and the *Vikramoorvaseeya* of Kalidasa ; such stanzas as are illustrative of the *Alankara*, *Athisayokthi* (hyperbole) represent the *Adbutha* ; descriptions in didactic works of the pains and miseries of embodied existence, ante-natal life, the transiency of this house of flesh, the pangs of death, the miseries of war and the horrors of hell arouse in us feelings of disgust ; descriptions of burning-grounds, battle-fields, Rakshasas, Asuras and such like arouse in us the sentiment of Fear ; the *Mahaveera-charithra* and the *Venee-samhara* depict the *Veera* and the *Raudra* Rasas; the words of the *Vidooshakas* (court-fools) and the entire body of the *Prahasanas* (screaming farces) have the *Hasya* as their key-note; indifference to worldly pleasures and a calmness of soul that nothing could disturb,

is secured to us by the study of such works as the Bhagavad-geetha, the Bhagavatha, the Vairagya-sathaka and the like.

P. 27, 5. *Model* :—Countless are the works suggested by Valmeeki's Ramayana; countless are the imitations thereof ; but, it is still their ideal and unapproached.

P. 28, 1. *The noble poem* :— Rama was not wrong in saying so, in attributing to it extreme sanctity, greatness and glory. "You are the life and soul of the Ramayana," says the Sree-guna-rathna-kosa, speaking of Maha-lakshmi. Again, the passage "Unbounded is the might of him whom Janaka's daughter has chosen as her husband" (V.R.III. 37) reveals to us the innate superiority of Seetha over Rama.

(a) Of the many reasons adduced by Dasaratha against sending Rama after Visvamithra, one was that the boy was not yet sixteen. But, Rama was only twelve at that time ; and it would not do to speak of him as a little below sixteen. Now, the Teachers understand it to mean that Rama, the Supreme Person, was, in his incarnation, not yet completely equipped for his work. The Purusha has sixteen kalas(rays), and Rama fell a little short of the number. Visvamithra imparted to him the mysteries of the divine weapons, that were to be used against the demons of darkness ; he took him to Mithila, and caused him to break the bow of Siva, thus absorbing into himself the energy concentrated in it by Mahadeva, one of the Trinity. For, Rama was the Preserver; wrath and destruction was not in his nature ; he had to borrow them, as it were, from Rudra, the Destroyer. The sage undertook a very strange mission for him ; he became a match-maker and induced Janaka to give his daughter in marriage to Rama, who thus became perfect. Sakthi, the last and the greatest of the kalas, was inseparably wedded to her Lord. But for her, he could not have annihilated the Rakshasa brood.

Q. How do you account for the easy victory that Rama gained over Thataka, Subahu and Mareecha? He was not then married.

A. The Vidyas, Bala and Athibala, imparted to him by the sage during their journey to his Asrama, gave him power to slay Thataka ; while, the divine weapons given him by his Teacher at the close of the sacrifice enabled him to destroy Mareecha, Subahu and their followers.

(b) Khara, Dooshana, Thrisiras and their 14,000 followers were exterminated by Rama, alone and unaided, in a shorter time than it would take to count them. Later on, he had to fight against Ravana and his hosts ; Lakshmana, almost equal to Rama in valour and might, then fought with him ; Hanuman, Sugreeva, Jambavan, Angada and the countless monkeys loyally aided him ; the divine weapons given him by Agasthya were constantly in use ; Vibheeshana rendered him signal service in furnishing him with every information about the enemy ; but—Rama was no whit nearer success. Agasthya had to impart to him the mystery of the Adithya-hridaya ; Indra had to send down his war-chariot ; Mathali, the divine charioteer, had to guide the horses ; for days and nights the hero had to fight on without pause, without break ; and in the end, he managed to slay Ravana with the Brahmasthra. Seetha, the Divine Energy was *with* Rama on the former occasion ; she was *away* from him in his battle with Ravana. Seetha openly embraced Rama on his return to her from his battle with Khara and his Rakshasas, bristling with arrows, bleeding at every pore like the Asoka tree in full bloom. What, Seetha, the soul of propriety, the ideal of womanly modesty and timidity to dare to do this ! It is a very suggestive incident hinting at profound mysteries. She but infused into him fresh

life, vigour and energy in place of what he had to expend in his fight with the demons.

(c) “ Ravana ! I have not my lord’s sanction to destroy you. If I took it upon myself, my spiritual energy would suffer waste. I would not be a true wife to Rama. I would deprive him of glory and fame that ought to be his. Else, I could, with a slight up-raise of my eye-brow, consume you to ashes. Fool ! You deceive yourself with the idea that you took me away by force from the side of Rama. Could that ever be ? Your fate comes upon you apace, and my abduction at your hands is but a friendly hint thrown out to you.”—(V. R. V. 22).

“ A blazing fire is as nothing before the anger shot from Seetha’s eyes. Wonderful is the might acquired by Ravana’s stern thapas, in that it has saved him from being reduced to ashes when he laid violent hands upon her” (Ib., *id.* 59).

(d) Ravana importuned her time and oft to become his mistress. He used every art in his power to shake her resolve. At last, Seetha began to reply ; but, she bethought herself that she might be unconsciously led to anger, and dart glances of wrath at him. In a moment he would be but a heap of ashes. She would have robbed Rama of the fame and glory that would be his of right, as the Fate that laid low the proud head of the monarch of Lanka ; she would have earned for herself an immortality of evil fame as the model wife that set at naught the expressed wishes of her lord and husband. So, it were best that she provided against such a dread contingency by placing before her on the ground a blade of straw upon which her unconscious wrath might vent itself. (Ib. *id.* 21-2.) It was but a trifle for her to annihilate the terrible Ravana.

Q.—The Ramayana records many instances when Rama has extended his love and protection to such as took refuge in him, thereby illustrating the supreme greatness of the Doctrine of Surrender ; but Seetha is not so distinguished.

A.—Let us examine Rama's claims first.

Q.—The Devas groaned under the tyranny of Ravana and sought refuge with the Lord. He came down on earth in consequence, lived as a man among men, slew in stern battle Ravana and his dark brood ; and were not the worlds made brighter thereby and the hearts of men and gods gladdened ?

A.—If He took birth as a man solely and wholly in response to their appeal, you would be about right. But the curse of Bhrigu, the curse of Narada, the curse of Vrinda and many other causes demanded His presence on earth ; and He but made a virtue of necessity if you affirm that His incarnation is the immediate reply to the heart-cry of the Shining Ones. Have you any other claims more reasonable?

Q.—Bharatha took refuge with Rama and prayed him to come back and rule over Ayodhya. Rama granted his prayer, gave him his wooden sandals to keep till he should come back and when he had destroyed the Rakshasas, returned on the very day he promised to and took over the kingdom from him. This is good evidence, is it not ?

A.—Dasaratha had promised Kaikeyee two boons ; and in consequence, the kingdom was secured to Bharatha passing over Rama. He refused what was not his ; he wanted to keep the word passed by his father, and he returned only after the period of exile was over. There is nothing very wonderful or impossible in this ; anyone endowed with an ordinary amount of self-respect would have done the same.

Besides, Kaikeyee desired that her son Bharatha should rule over Ayodhya ; she never bargained that Rama should get it back from him and rule instead. So, why bring in the question of the Doctrine of Surrender and once more make a virtue of necessity ? You are not very happy in your choice of proofs. Moreover, we have the distinct and emphatic declaration of Rama himself to support us. " I will be the last man to harbour even the shadow of a desire to rule over this fair realm ; nay, I will not accept it. Far more pleasant and congenial to me would be a free and calm life in the pathless woods. Neither this kingdom, nor this broad earth, nor the manifold pleasures of life here, nor the Mansions of the Blessed on high, nay, not even my life has any power to attract me." (*V. R. II*, 34). " Lakshmana ! you might seek far and wide and never come upon another such a good father as ours. Behold ! A woman's word, light as a feather, a glance of her angry eyes was enough to condemn to a horrible exile for ten years and four, him whom he called, time and oft, the darling of his heart, the apple of his eye, the life of his life—and I, tried my very best to be an ideal son to him. Brother mine ! pardon me saying it, but Folly could grow no further. Well, Bharatha, the fortunate son of Kaikayee, who lies upon the heart of the king, may now lord it over the broad dominions of Kosala and his wife with him—free, without a rival and supremely happy. But, fair brother, you know best what my wrath can do. This universe, animate and inanimate, is but a pile of ashes if I set my dread shaft at it. It is but sweet pity that holds my hand back ; it is the Holy Books of our people that tell us it is the greatest of sins to go against Law and Duty ; they say that the offenders have to pay very heavily for it in the super-physical worlds. Ah ! would that my hands were free and unchained! Nothing else prevents me but the fear of the future. And

right fortunate for our father and brother that it is so. My fingers itch to bend my mighty bow and plant a keen shaft in the false hearts of Dasaratha and Bharatha ; it will be mercy enough, if I should let them escape with their lives. And, after all, I would have but come into my own, nor usurped another's right." (*Ib.* 53). Now, honestly speaking, is it not the veriest contradiction ! And, this is he to whom nothing on earth or in the heavens above nor in the hells below holds any charm.

Further, when Ravana and his impious crew had been wiped clean off the earth and Rama was at Bharadwaja's hermitage on his way back to Ayodhya, he sent before him Hanuman to apprise Bharatha of his arrival. He would not stay at Lanka a moment to accept the kind and sincere hospitality of Vibheeshana ; his brother, dearer unto him than life itself, was wearing out his heart for him in anxious expectation, his eyes eagerly scanning the road that leads from the forests to fair Ayodhya. No happiness for him, no pleasures, no baths, no perfumes, no royal dresses or decorations until he clasps Bharatha to his heart. For, as he said Lakshmana, "As a brother, Bharatha stands unrivalled in the world, past, present and future." But—just mark the instructions he gives to his trusted messenger about Bharatha. "Narrate unto him in detail everything that befell me from the time he saw me last till now. But, all the while observe him carefully; mark the fleeting expressions that pass over his face and form an index to his feelings, his movements, his acts, his words and any other thing that might enable you to read his heart like an open book. It is but natural that, after having exercised unbounded sway over the empire of Kosala and had his heart's desires gratified to their utmost, he should find it hard to be called upon to resign his kingdom, his pomp, his power, his pleasures and sink back into insignificance among the weltering crowd,

Nay, one should be either below or above man not to yield to the sweet temptation." Now, he knew, better than any other, that Bharatha had no other god but him; that he had set his hopes upon him, then and for ever; that earnest and humble service to him in all times and in all places was his Means and his Goal; that the world and its hollow phantoms of joy and power were to him as nought. But, why should Rama, his god, his ideal, thus cruelly suspect him? Is it manly? Is it brotherly? Is it a Master of Compassion that speaks? Is it the Teacher of the Doctrine of Surrender? Well; let us hear of some other instance less illogical and more reasonable.

Q.—A crow offered him a deadly insult, one which the meanest of men would avenge dreadfully. Yet, when the miserable criminal clasped his feet in humble appeal, he gave it refuge; he pardoned it; he gave it back the life that was rightly forfeited. Now, is it not as good an instance as any one can wish?

A.—Unfortunately no. The crow insulted *Seetha*, and not Rama. Yet, *she* was never wroth against him; *she* did not cry out for vengeance; *she* did not hound on her husband to pursue the offender. On the contrary, when the crow had exhausted every available source of help, every means of escape, it came back even unto him whose red shaft pursued it mercilessly. In its utter bewilderment it unconsciously clasped the feet of Seetha, mistaking her for Rama. She was sorely afraid that her lord would take offence at this unwitting slight offered to him; for, were not the feet of the crow stretched towards him, who held its life in the hollow of his hand? So, she hastened to lift it up and place its head at the feet of Rama. *Such was the love of the Mother of Mercy.* But, Rama, whom the crow had never offended, was beside himself with rage. Against the puny creature, too

far below notice as an opponent, Rama, the descendent of monarchs, the veteran warrior, launched his terrible shaft. He chased it without a moment's respite through the three worlds ; and at last, the miserable bird came back in utter despair to him who set his blood-hounds upon it, and laid its head at his feet in abject submission. He granted it life—but at the earnest appeal and prayer of Seetha who suffered most. Nay, even then, his calculating instincts got the better of him and the crow bought its deliverance from death with one of his eyes. A fair example of the Doctrine of Surrender ! !

Q.—Let be. A vulture, a mere bird, was raised by him to the Worlds of Light that are won by incalculable ages of hard thapas and no end of merit.

A.—Yes. Jatayus, the vulture, the friend of his father, defended Seetha to the last, and nobly sacrificed his life in his master's cause; and, Rama freed him from the cycle of birth and death. But, when all is said and done, it is a bargain, and no disinterested act. It is not a thing to be proud of.

Q.—Well. The hermits of Dandaka prayed Rama to save them from the cruelties of the Rakshasas and nobly did Rama fulfil his promise to them. Surely, you cannot attach any stigma of selfishness or calculation to it.

A.—Unfortunately yes. The same causes that vitiated the first instance hold good here too in full force.

Q.—Vali insulted his brother Sugreeva past all bearing ; he forcibly took his wife into himself ; he chased him to the four corners of the Earth ; he kept him ever in mortal terror of himself. Now, Rama interposed, took Sugreeva under his protection, put an end to Vali's career of iniquity and restored to Sugreeva his wife and his kingdom. What have you to say to this ? Sugreeva took refuge with Rama and had no reason to repent of it.

A.—Very good. Rama gave back to Sugreeva his lost wife ; but the monkey-king did not stand under any great obligations to Rama ; for, he and his myriad hosts of monkeys and bears placed themselves at the disposal of Rama, sought for his wife far and near, discovered her at Lanka, did yeoman service in exterminating the Rakshasas and restored Seetha to the arms of her husband. Again, nice calculation ; again, a hard-driven bargain, worthy of a son of Israel. A truce to this and similar proofs of Rama's *disinterested compassion*.

Further, Rama had no cause of quarrel with Vali. Like a coward, like a common assassin, like a hired bravo, he stabbed Vali in the dark from behind ; he lay concealed behind the leafy foliage of a tree when he let fly his treacherous arrow at the heart of the noble Vali, whom he dared not face in open fight. He shot the hero of a hundred fights while he was fighting with Sugreeva —another act of meanness and cowardice. But the arrow of his brother slew him when he came down again on earth as Krishna ; for, the hunter was no other than the son of his father, albeit illegitimate.

Moreover, the head and front of Vali's offence was his abduction of Sugreeva's wife and for this heinous crime the lord of monkeys was foully done to death. But, the very same champion of justice and morality looked on with approval while Sugreeva, his protege, took unto himself Thara, the wife of Vali, his elder brother.

Q.—It may be so. But I shall submit to your consideration the last and the most forcible instance ; and I am sure that you have but to hear it to accept it unreservedly and without demur. What say you of the world-famous Vibheeshana-saranagathi ? Rama gave shelter to the brother of the very man who had offered him the deadliest of insults. Against the advice and the importunities of his friends,

Sugreeva and his captains, he welcomed Vibheeshana, promised him refuge and protection, destroyed his enemies and gave him the empire of the Rakshasas to rule over?

A.—I am glad you have come to the end of your list. Now, for your ideal example. Vibheeshana remained with his brother and king as long as he was basking in the smiles of Fortune. He was loaded with honors, titles, wealth, commands and every luxury his heart could desire. But, when the first breath of Adversity dimmed Ravana's reign of glory, the son of his father, the flesh of his flesh, abandoned him; nay, he went over to his deadliest enemy, placed himself at his absolute disposal, and by his cunning, by his treachery, brought about the destruction of his brother, his kith and kin and his race. His hatred did not stop at the gates of Death, but pursued Ravana beyond, into the realms of quiet and peace. He refused to perform for Dasagreeva the last offices that should raise him to the homes on high of his ancestors of happy memory. “Little do I reck what the stupid world might say of me. They may call me cruel, heartless and ungrateful. But, he who lies before me was my deadliest enemy and the most hated. It was but the accident of birth that brought us together as the sons of the same mother. True, he deserves respect and reverence at my hands as a brother ; but, I would be the greatest sinner if I should bow my head to him, knowing as I do his black heart and blacker deeds. The Path of Righteousness knows him not; he was a monster of cruelty, utterly heartless, nay, fiendish in his vengeance. Truth was a stranger to his lips ; many a woman's heart has he broken ; many a woman's fair name has he soiled ; many a woman's life has he made an everlasting hell ; the worlds stood in affright and dismay so long as he was counted among the living ; and now, they breath in peace. No, I will not defile myself by touching him.” And this was the amiable

and mild Vibheeshana who sought refuge with Rama ; this was the Vibheeshana whom Rama took unto his heart. I would like to know how *he* would have acted under similar circumstances—if Lakshmana were to go over to Ravana and canvass by every means in his power the death of his brother ; if Bharatha and Sathrughna were to aid the King of Lanka with their forces and those of their allies.

Now, “ look upon this picture and upon that,—the counterfeit presentment of two brothers.” Kumbhakarna, brother unto Ravana, heard that his king had abducted Sec-tha from the side of Rama; he knew it was a base and sinful deed ; he knew that it would bring upon them all sorrow, misery, disgrace and ruin ; he did not mince matters with Ravana, but spoke plainly and bluntly, even more so than Vibheeshana. But, here ends the comparison. Vibheeshana resented the obstinacy of Ravana ; his self-respect was wounded when he saw his advice not taken ; in high dudgeon he left the place with four follower to keep him company. Kumbhakarna but smiled in pity at Ravana’s pertinacity. He was too noble-minded to take notice of the insults offered to him. He would not take mortal offence because his sincere and precious advice was treated with contempt. He only said to himself, “ Poor Ravana is driving us on to certain destruction and all because he will not see that he is in the wrong. But, I know my duty better. It is right *here* by the side of my brother, my king and my bread-giver. Myself, my kith and kin, my wealth, my time, my talents, my hopes here and hereafter are valuable in my eyes only as they are useful to him and to his cause, right or wrong. It is not for a servant to look through or behind his master’s orders ; he knows but one thing—to obey.” And he went unto certain death, open-eyed and glad of heart. The Lords of Karma could not deny him the bright worlds where repose the Sons of Duty

and warriors stern, who never knew what it was to retreat. In later times, Bheeshma, Drona, Kripa, Karna, and numerous others knew full well that King Dhritharashtra and his sons acted wrongly and flouted law and justice. But, it was not for *them* to question. They did their duty in pointing out the two paths ; which advice being neglected, they did their duty to the last, and gave up their bodies and lives on the field of battle for those whose salt they had eaten. Sugreeva and Vibheeshana taking refuge with Rama were but two offenders against human law and justice seeking some one who will wink at their crimes and further their traitorous schemes ; Rama's offering them refuge and protection is but a polite name for shielding criminals and driving hard bargains with them, all along with a careful eye to his own interests. Now, your world-famous Vibheeshana-saranagathi, what is it, to put it most mildly, but a practical demonstration of the old proverb, "Scratch my back and I will scratch yours?"

"Never shall I let go the hand of him who seeks me out as a friend. He may have 'one virtue linked to a thousand crimes'; but he is all the more welcome to me and to all good men. It is quite enough if a man comes up to me and says but once 'I am yours to do with me as you will' ; and right then and there do I promise him safety, and immunity ; he has nothing more to fear from any created being. This is my rule of life ; this is my motto ; this is vow I shall ever keep". Now, this I believe, is the text upon which you found your famous Doctrine of Surrender. Let us examine them somewhat.

Whenever a man is borne down to the earth by his load of misery, whenever dangers and troubles assail him from every side, he seeks out one whose eyes can see into his heart, whose heart can beat in sympathy with his grief, whose arm can stand between him and his Nemesis. And

to him he clasps hands of appeal and cries "Lord ! Misery has marked me for its own. Powerless am I to stay its cruel hand. No other protector have I but you. My only refuge is in your mercy. It behoves thee to stand between me and my torment." "Fear not," exclaims the saviour, out of the utter pity that wells up from the depths of his heart, "It shall be my care to see that sorrow and grief, danger and trouble approach you not. You have my word for it." He never seeks any return nor even dreams of it; his wealth, his kin, his friends, his followers, his fame, his life, his hopes here and hereafter are as nothing to him before his plighted word. This is *Abhaya-pradana*—offering refuge to him who seeks it.

He is most deserving of charity or assistance, from whom we have not as yet received any help or obligation, and from whom we have no reason to expect it at any time hereafter. Refuge too should be offered *only to such a one*.

When a man offends us grievously and we are about to wreak our vengeance upon him, he clasps our feet and cries to us in piteous accents, "Save me. I have sinned against you." Our nobler instincts might change our wrath into pity and we may forgive him his offence ; but, *that* is not *Abhaya-pradana*. *That* is nothing for us to be proud of ; for, it is our duty to forgive those that injure us. Now, from whose wrath do we save him ? From whom do we protect him ?

We let him exhaust every available source of refuge. Every one turns his face from the suppliant. In the extremity of despair, he comes to us ; and we exclaim out of a conceited heart, "Fear not. I shall be your saviour". But, there is no virtue in it nor glory. If, in a village, there are none others who can afford to entertain wayfarers and guests, the rich man of the place can claim no special merit if he keeps open house to the hungry and the needy ;

for, they come to him perforce, and common humanity will not allow him to shut his doors against them. But, if, when there are many in the village who can well afford to give shelter and food to the hungry, the rich man above mentioned anticipates them, *that* is something to speak of ; *that* is hospitality.

A poor soul, whom the rough gales of adversity have driven adrift, swallows his pride, self-respect and manhood, lays his head at our feet and cries, “ I am powerless to save myself. I take my refuge in you ;” and we, with a heart big with pride, extend our lofty protection unto him. Take another case. The victim of misfortune seeks us not ; his voice is not raised to us in piteous appeal ; he keeps his sorrow unto himself ; we seek him out ; we gauge his depth of suffering ; and when he least expects it, we chase away his fears. Now, which is more manly, more honourable, more sympathetic, more welcome, more characteristic of a champion of the Doctrine of Surrender ? But, Rama has expressed in no uncertain terms, that he who takes refuge in him must present, as his first credentials, the outspoken confession of utter inability and weakness to save himself—“ My hands are powerless to ward off the dangers that assail me. I take my refuge in you. Save me, O, Lord of Mercy ! ”

Further, Rama’s words—“ Even if he possesses a single virtue linked to a thousand crimes ”—are an open confession of his views of the question. He admits that *there are men who offend* and who ought to be forgiven. Besides, there is no recorded instance of his forgiving fully and freely and disinterestedly any one who did *him* a serious harm.

Q.—If Rama, the Ideal King, does not illustrate in himself the Doctrine of Refuge in all its grandeur, in all its beauty and in all its perfection, then, surely we have no other being in the whole creation that can take his place ?

A.—Nay, not so. Seetha, the Mother of Mercy, stands forth for all time the best and the noblest champion of the Doctrine of Refuge.

The crow dug his brazen beak and talons into her fair and soft flesh; he offered her the deadliest insult ever known; but, she pitied his ignorance that drove him on to the crime; she stood up between him and the wrath of Rama ; she begged his life from her lord and successfully.

Her jailers, the Rakshasis, cruel, heartless and terrible of visage, threatened her time and oft with mutilation, and refined torture ; reviled and scoffed at her ; made her the most repulsive and horrible proposals. But, never for a single moment did any shadow of resentment darken her heart, never any the least craving for vengeance, for punishment ; her spirit was never wroth at their inhumanities. Later on, Thrijata described to the tormentors the dream that she saw and said, "I know, of a truth, that Rama comes here sooner than you think. Ravana and his race are to be wiped off the earth, root and branch. This Seetha, your uncomplaining victim, shall see the end of her sorrows and shall sit on the lap of her noble lord. But, then your hour of doom and torment strikes ; and if you would be spared the dread vengeance of Rama, if you would not that the hounds of Seetha's righteous wrath fasten their brazen fangs deep into your vitals, clasp her feet in piteous appeal ; soothe her wounded heart with soft prayer ; prefer in time your petitions for pardon and mercy. Fear not that she will spurn you in scorn and anger ; for, one has but to murmur 'I seek your protection' to be assured of her pity and grace. She and no other, can ward off the dread chastisement that hangs over our heads. So, let us take our refuge in her." But, they, out of natural mistrust and hardness of heart, spoke not. And, lo ! Seetha took their dubious silence for glad consent and exclaimed out of a heart welling with

pity, "I will, of a surety, protect you from harm".—
V. R. V. 51.

Hanuman sought her out in the Asoka garden after the war was over and said, "Mother of Mercy ! These hags, these Rakshasis, tormented you cruelly past all bearing, when you were plunged in grief ; they scoffed at your love towards my Lord ; they tried every means in their power to turn your heart away from Rama ; they would have thrown you into the arms of Ravana ; and I stood by, I saw it all—a silent and impotent spectator. But, *my* time is come ; this is *my* hour of victory ; this is *their* hour of doom. Their lord and master, who set them on to this task, is now a headless corpse ; and they have no one to save them from my just wrath. I await but a single word of permission from you to wreak my fearful vengeance upon them." So he prayed—he who had done unto her the most valuable service ; he who sought her out in her desolation, in her prison and brought her comfort, hope and joy ; he who restored her to the arms of her lord and love. But, she never hesitated ; she never faltered ; no considerations, no benefits, no hopes, no partiality, no prejudices dimmed, even for a moment, her clear conception of duty, of mercy and of justice. "Maruthi, thou faithful friend and loyal henchman ! Know you not that these are the slaves of Ravana ? Their bodies, their souls, their words, their acts are at *his* command ; they are but moving automata that obey *his* slightest thought ; how then are *they* responsible for what they did ? Have *they* any cause of anger against me ? *They* had no mind to torment me. Now that their master Ravana is dead, they persecute me no more. One should be very much below humanity to be wroth with them. I but reap what I sowed in the past ; and, no other can take my place. It is only the foolish beast that would bite to pieces the shaft that wounds his heart, but

looks not beyond it to him who sent it. So, these have done me no harm and I have nothing to complain of at their hands. Then, why should *you* desire to torment them ?

Once upon a time, a hunter was chased by a tiger very closely and saved himself by running up a lofty tree that stood welcomingly near. But lo ! there was a huge grizzly bear sitting on its branches ; the man, in utter despair, threw himself on the mercy of the hairy monster and cried "I place my life in your hands. Do with me as you will." "Fear not" replied the bear . "The tiger shall not come at you." Later on, the hunter was overcome with sleep and the bear allowed him to rest his head on its lap. Then, the tiger called out to the bear above and said "Friend, we are of the same kind ; we live in the same forest ; we have our joys and sorrows in common. But, this is a man, a hunter by profession and our sworn enemy ; he makes his living by killing us ; he is not of our kith nor kin ; we have nothing in common with him. The moment he is safe from my clutches, he will forget everything that he owes you and will return your kindness by seeking to kill you. Throw him down to me. We will go shares upon him."

Then, the bear, out of the generosity of his nature, sternly replied, "Enough of this. What treachery and baseness ! He who seeks me out and craves my protection is my honored guest. If I should place myself on a level with you and traitorously hand him over to your tender mercies, the finger of Scorn would be ever pointed at me as a monster of wickedness, as a wretch that betrayed him that sought shelter with me. Nay, the Holy Books say that an eternity of nameless woe in the deepest and the darkest hells is the portion of such ingrates. Soil my ears no more with such foulness."

Soon after, the hunter awoke, and the bear, feeling tired and sleepy, laid his head on his lap and fell into profound slumber. Then, the tiger called out to him and said "Fool ! You sought to escape me, is it ? A nice person have you pitched upon to protect you. May be you belong to the same species ; may be you live together ; may be he is your dear friend. Idiot that you are ! Know you not that he is a deadlier enemy to you than myself. You have played into his hands nicely and placed your head between his jaws. He but waits for me to leave this place to crush your poor bones to powder. Now, be wise and take heed in time. Throw him down to me while he is heavy with sleep. It matters very little to me whether you or he goes to relieve my pangs of hunger. Look sharp and neither of us will be the worse for it."

Alas ! Man, frail man, listened to the words of the tempter and fell. Distrust of the noble bear grew upon him apace and without a pang of regret he threw him down to the tiger. But, beneficent Providence slept not ; the bear awoke as it fell and by an instinctive movement, caught at a branch and swung himself up to his seat. Then horrible fear came over the traitor and he gave himself up for lost. But, the noble beast read his heart like an open book and said to him with a smile, "Good man ! Fear not. Far be it from me to ever seek to remember what you might have been tempted to do ; and far be it from me to seek to go back upon my plighted word."

At once, the wily tiger turned the situation to his advantage and cried out, "Friend Bruin ! See you not that I was a true prophet ? Now, it needs no ghost to tell you that your protege is a demon of ingratitude. If you have not taken leave of your senses, you will at once throw him down to me."

And to him spake back the bear, “ It is in the nature of things for fire to scorch, for water to drown, for scorpions to sting, for cobras to kill. A wicked heart ever asserts itself ; but, no one who walks the Path of Righteousness ever dreams of taking offence at it. He would not place himself on the same level by seeking to pay back ingratitude with injury. To me my life is as naught, when placed against my plighted word. Truth is the brightest jewel that ever shines on the head of the righteous.” He closed his ears to every argument that the tiger used to draw him away from his purpose and watched over the safety of the hunter that live-long night until the tiger slunk away from the spot in sheer despair,

Now, Anjaneya ! you would be the last to advise me to behave less nobly than the beast. He who does us good is entitled to our love, to our gratitude, even to the fullest, is it not ? But, equally so, if not more, is he who seeks to harm us. It is no great boast that we return good for good ; but, to return good for evil is something worth remembering.

Now, take this view of the case. If every being in the universe were to sin and go against the Good Law, then, sin is no name for it. Now, can you point out to me any one who has not sinned ? If so, he is welcome to judge the others and punish them. Let him that is pure, let him that is perfect, sit in judgment over the guilty. It is my honest conviction that the wide world holds none such. All have broken the sweet harmony of nature or will ; all deserve to be judged and punished ; and then, it is no crime and it is no punishment. Hence, I say unto you “ **THERE IS NO EVIL IN THE WORLD ; THERE IS NO EVIL-DOER, NAY, NOT ONE.** ”

My lord and master, whom all hold as the Ideal Man, the Soul of Perfection, is the first offender and the worst—even he to whose service you have dedicated yourself. The

meanest and the most insignificant creature on earth seeks to protect with his life, if necessary, its mate, who looks up to it for help, for guidance and for safety. It defends her life, her honor and her happiness with its last breath. Behold ! Sree Rama is a man, the crown of creation ; nay, more, he is a warrior brave, and the descendant of a long line of heroes ; the blood of the Ikshwakus runs in his veins. And here, he has chosen to swallow an insult, even the deadliest, put up on him by a Rakshasa. He calls me his wife ; he took my hand into his before the bright God of Fire, swore for all time to love, to cherish and to protect me ; I am, as he says, dearer to him than life ; I put my trust in his manhood, in his might, in his nobility and followed him to the trackless wilds ; and there came a vile Rakshasa, a monster of iniquity, laid violent hands upon me, and bore me away to his island-lair. Hours, days, weeks, months have gone by ; and still my lord comes not ; his patience or cowardice is something unspeakable. Is it human ? Is it manly ? Is it warrior-like ? is it kingly ? Was I wrong in saying that he is the first and the worst of offenders? Go, mete out just punishment to *him* first and foremost.

You come next. Sugreeva's servant you are and messenger ; his word is or should be a law unto you ; it is not for you to transgress it nor to exceed it. He who does not what his master bids him is as much guilty as he who does what his master bids him not. Now, honestly speaking, were your master's commands to seek me out and take back the news to him ? Or, had you orders to go further, to destroy this Asoka grove, to slay the warriors Ravana, and set fire to his capital ? You are a traitor unto your master, You are a criminal of no mean order. Go, mete out justice and punishment to *yourself* before you speak of others.

Last, but not the least, I who discourse so wisely to you, am a great offender. The daughter of a race of warriors, spouse to the greatest hero of all time, I live in the breath of my fair name and chastity ; I should know no other god but my husband ; and never, even in my wildest dreams, should the shadow of another man darken my heart. I should have put away this frail body the moment that the impious hands of the Rakshasa polluted it with their touch. That is or should have been my Dharma, But I turned my face away from it ; twice five months have gone by ; and yet you see me clinging to this hated life like the most abandoned woman. Go, mete out justice due and punishment stern to *me*, ere you proceed further.

Now, sit in honest judgment over Sree Rama, yourself and me, Time enough to think of how you should deal with the poor Rakshasis." (V. R. VI. 115).

Who is the champion and the living exponent of the Doctrine of Refuge ? Rama or Seetha ? These and many other considerations go to prove that Valmeeki was perfectly right in designating his noble epic as *Seetha-Charithra* of mighty renown.—Go,

27. 26 Sang :—*Vide V. R. VII. 71, 93, 94, 98, 99.*

26, 6. *The science and art of song* :—Musical instruments among the Hindus are classified into Thatha (stringed), Sushira (having holes), Avanaddha (covered with leather) and Ghana (solid). The Veena, the Sithar, the Fiddle, the Violin, the Harp and other stringed instruments come under Thatha. Veenas are either Sruthi-veena, adapted to the 22 sruthis or the Swara-veena, adapted to the seven swaras. The Ekathanthri or Brahma-veena (one-stringed), the Nakula (two-stringed), the Thrithantrika or Janthra (three-stringed), the Chithra (seven-stringed), the Vipanachika (nine-stringed), the Maththakokila, or Swaramandala (twenty-one

stringed), the Alapini, the Kinnari, the Pinaki, the Parivadini and the Nissanka are the chief varieties. Kachchapee, Mahathee, Kalavathee and Puruhoothhee are the names of the Veenas used by Sarasvathi, the Goddess of Speech, Narada, Thumbaru and Visvavasu, the Gandharvas, respectively.

The *Raga vibodha* describes the construction of the Veena thus :—The frame should be 46 Indian inches in length. Five inches from the end there should be a hole open on both sides of the Veena to fix the movable pegs. An inch within this hole should be made another smaller one, with a firmly fixed peg to hold fast the moveable peg. One inch beyond this a little piece of wood about 2 inches high and 4 inches wide should be placed for the strings to run over."

An ideal player upon the Veena should be a proficient in the technicalities of Nada, Sruthi, Swara, Grama and Raga ; of handsome mien and faultless features, he should not move to and fro from his seat ; his arms and fingers should not tire and show signs of exhaustion during the performance. Calmness, self-control, keenness of perception, concentration of mind, a melodious voice and proficiency in vocal and instrumental music should form his prominent characteristics.

The Sushira includes Vamsa, Pava, Pavika, Muralee, Madhukaree, Kahala, Tundukinee, Chukka (all varieties of the flute), Sringa (the horn), Sankha (the conch) etc.

The perfect player on the above should not move from his seat when playing ; his fingers should pass with marvellous rapidity over the sound-holes ; he should bring out the nature and soul of the Ragas and the Raginis; he should be a skilled vocalist ; by suitable preludes he should guide those who sing to his accompaniment ; and he should deftly cover up their defects. There should be a leader and four others to follow him.

The Avanaddha includes the Pataha, Mardala, Hudukka, Karata, Ghata, Ghatasa, Davasa, Dakka, Damaruka, Dhakkalee, Runja, Thrivalie, Dundubhee, Bheri, Nissana, Thumbakee, Mandidakka, Jhallari, Selluka, Dukkuli and other varieties, of which the drum and the kettle-drum are the types.

The Ghana comprises the Thala, Kamsya-thala, Ghanta, Kshudra-ghantika, Jayaghanta, Kasra, Sukthi, Patta and other varieties, of which the cymbals, the bells, great and small, the gong, and the triangle, are the most widely known.

The above are generally played upon during the coronations of kings, marches, festivals, marriages and other festive occasions, earth-quakes and other portents, battles, and the intervals between scenes and acts in plays depicting the Heroic and the Terrible. They ward off evil, put life and energy into the hearts of warriors and lead them on to deeds of fame and valour.

The *Vamsa* (flute) is generally made of bamboo, mahogany, ivory, sandal-wood, iron, bronze, silver or gold. Its varieties are named Umapathi, Thripurusha, Chathurmukha, Panchavakthra, Shanmukha, Muni, Vasu, Nadendra, Mahananda, Rudra, Adithya, Manu, Kala-nithi, Ashthadasangula, Murali and Sruthi-nithi, according as the distance from the sounding hole and the last one is 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20 and 22 inches respectively. Those with less than 5 inches interval are pitched too high ; the Murali and the Sruthi-nithi are pitched too low ; those with intervals of 13, 15 and 17 inches do not clearly mark out the notes ; hence the above varieties are not generally favoured.

The *Pava* is made of bamboo ; it is 9 inches long and bound with tin bands.

The *Pavika* too is made of bamboo ; it is 12

inches long and has a sounding hole and 5 others to play on. The Yakshas and the Nagas are charmed by it.

The *Muralee* is over two spans in length and has four holes to play upon.

The *Madhukarree* is 28 inches long and made of horn or wood. Four inches from the sounding hole, there are seven others to play upon. Between the two there is another on the other side, in which a small copper tube is inserted to make the sound sweeter. It is alternately closed and opened with the left thumb when playing.

The *Kahala* is three spans in length and made of copper, silver or gold. Its mouth is formed like the Dhatura flower in bloom. It produces *Ha*, *Hoo* and similar sounds and is generally played when announcing the deeds and glories and titles of warriors and heroes. The Thundukini and the Chukka are other varieties of it, two and four spans in length respectively.

The *Sringa* (the horn) is shaped like the face of an elephant and is made of ox-horn. It is smooth and shapely ; a piece of the bull's horn, 8 inches long and like the Dhatura flower in shape, is to be attached to the bottom. It is generally used by shepherds.

The *Conch* should be flawless, deep in the middle and not exceeding 11 inches in length. It tapers gradually from the sounding hole, which should be $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch in diameter.

The *Pataha* is two-fold, corresponding to the Margi and the Desi styles of music.

The *Ghata* is like a pot in appearance, hard, smooth and made of well-baked clay. Small of mouth and large of body, it is sometimes covered with a piece of leather over the former. It is placed on the lap and played upon with both hands.

The *Dundubhi* (war-drum) gives out a loud and sonorous sound even like the roaring of dark clouds during

the rains. It is played upon in the houses of gods, or after victories, or on auspicious occasions.

The *Ghana* variety include all musical instruments made of bronze well-purified, The *Ghanta* (bell) is generally rung during divine worship.

VOCAL MUSIC.

Sadasiva, Parvathi, Brahma, Bharatha, Kasyapa, Matanga, Yashtika, Durga, Sakthi, Bharadwaja, Gauthama, Vasishtha, Chyavana, Bhringi, Yagnavalkya, Brihaspathi, Sukra, Ganesa, Subrahmanya, Vayu, Kambala, Aswathara, Narada, Thumbruru, Anjaneya, Ravana, Nandi, Visvavasu, Rambha, Haha, Hoohoo, Usha, Adisesha, Sarngadeva, Somanatha, Sardoola, Kohala, Visakhila, Danthila, Arjuna, Mathriguptha, Swathi, Guha, Bindu-raja, Kshethra-raja, Rahala, Rudrasena, Bhoja, Paramapthi, Somasa, Lollata, Nobhata, Sankuka, Bhatta, Abhinavaguptha, Keerthidhara and many others are regarded as very high authorities on the science and art of music.

The western world can have no better idea of Hindu music as a science and an art than that conveyed in the following extracts from the writings of my esteemed friend Mr. P. Thirumalayya Naidu of Madras, whose profound study of the theory and the practice of music in the East and in the West entitles him, more than any other, to speak with authority on the subject.

HINDU MUSIC.

"The unqualified testimony of oriental scholars has long marked India as the cradle of arts, sciences and literature, at a time when other nations scarcely emerged from the rudest state of barbarism. The early speculations of the Hindus overran every department of scientific truth and of philosophical research. The character of their religious institutions necessitated an early enquiry into the intricacies

of various sciences whose knowledge was indispensable to them. Their proficiency in the most abstruse mathematics and astronomy, and their ever-marked readiness to unriddle the complex subtleties of metaphysics have always excited universal admiration. As “the country which affords us the most ancient memorials of a perfect language, of an advanced civilization, of a philosophy where all directions of human thought find their expression, of a poetry immensely rich in every style,” it was no less remarkable for “a musical art corresponding with the lively sensibility of the people”. At a time when other nations were perhaps revelling in the scanty pleasure afforded by combinations of a few musical sounds, the Hindu sages already knew the origin of sound and were acquainted with the relationship of musical sounds in all their details. The sacrificial rites enjoined by their religion were always accompanied by chants of Vedic hymns. These which were sung perhaps at the early dawn of civilization, have come down to us with unslued purity and transcendental beauty, and are held in a venerable appreciation which lapse of time could not alter. They are considered by some European scholars as the pastoral song of a nation of shepherds. They must indeed be extraordinary shepherds, who, at such an early stage of the world, had such a wonderful perception of sound as to enable them to arrive at its thorough analysis. They must have been extraordinary men who invented stringed instruments and knew the use of frets, at a time of world's civilization when other countries scarcely emerged from the stage of percussive instruments, which is said to be the earliest in the history of music.

The hymns of the Rig and Sama Vedas are the earliest examples of words set to music. The authoress of “The music of the waters” says : “In the Rig-Veda or the sacred

hymns of the Brahmins, several hymns are addressed to waters (ap), some to the nadi (the rivers), and some to Maruts (the storms); so, the connexion between Indian Music and the world of waters is one of great antiquity and classical association. In Mr. D. Whitney's article on the Veda, he gives, amongst other portions of the work, a few of the hymns to the great rivers; one account of the propitiation of the two branches of the Indus—the modern Beas and Sutlej—by songs and praises from the Saint Viswamitra, the chief priest of Bharatas". The Vedic musical chants, a work of 4000 years ago, have the same thrilling charm and enduring interest to the modern Hindu, as it was to his simple ancestors, who, struck with the resplendent beauty of the rising sun, burst forth into praises of the sun as the "eye of the universe." Some suppose that the first development of our music dates from the composition of the Sama Veda which, it appears, recognises but five notes, *dha, ni, sa, ri, ga—ma* and *pa* being supposed to be later additions. Others suppose that "music must have been cultivated in very early ages by the Hindus, as the abridged names of the seven notes, viz. *sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, dha* and *ni*, are said to occur in the Sama Veda and in their perfect order." Numerous allusions to music and musical instruments occur in the Vedic literature. Later on, the names of the seven notes of the musical scale occur in the Vedangas, Chandas, and Sikshas.

In the Upanishads, which, Prof. Max Muller thinks, "must be older than 600 B. C. i. e., anterior to the rise of Buddhism", several references are found to musical instruments which were then in common use. In the Chandogya Upanishad, we find, "Therefore Vaka Dalbhya knew it. He was the Udgathri (singer) of the Naimishiya sacrificers and by singing he obtained for them their wishes". "The Udgeetha, of which a poet said, I chose the

deep sounding note of the Saman as good for cattle, belongs to Agni ; the indefinite note belongs to Prajapathi ; the definite note to Soma, the soft and smooth note to Vayu, the smooth and strong note to Indra, the heron-like note to Brihaspathi the dull note to Varuna". Rules were at an early period laid down as to the qualifications necessary for a singer at a sacrifice. We find in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, " He who knows what is the property of this Saman obtains property. Now verily its property is tone only. Therefore let a priest, who is going to perform the sacrificial work of a Sama-singer, desire that his voice may have a good tone, and let him perform the sacrifice with a voice that is in good tone. Therefore people (who want a priest) for a sacrifice, look out for one who possesses a good voice, as for one who possesses property". Mention is also made in the same Upanishad, of the drum, the conch-shell and the lute. It will be seen from the following quotation from the Aithareya Aranyaka that the lute of the modern day differs but slightly from a description of the one given therein. " Next comes this divine lute (the human body made by the gods). The lute made by man is an imitation of it. As there is a head of this, so there is a head of that (lute made by man). As there is a stomach of this, so there is a cavity (*i. e.*, the board) of that. As there is a tongue of this, so there is a tongue in that. As there are fingers of this, so there are strings of that. As there are vowels of this, so there are tones of that. As there are consonants of this, so there are touches of that. As this is endowed with sound and firmly strung, so that is endowed with sound and firmly strung. As this is covered with a hairy skin, so that is covered with a hairy skin. Verily in former times they covered a lute with a hairy skin". It is quite clear from the above, that lutes were in existence covered with hairy skin at a time even prior

to that of this Upanishad. In the Hamsopanishad, ten kinds of Nadas are mentioned. The names of the seven swaras occur in the Jabalopanishad, which also makes mention of the three-fold classification of music into Nriththa, Geetha and Vadya, which is also the modern division of the subject. The whole science of Hindu Music is said to be embodied in the Gandharva Veda which treats of "the origin of sound, of various modulations of voice, of the formation of the several scales, of the theory of intervals of time and of its variations in subordination to the prescribed measure". The Rama-yana mentions that Valmeeki taught the sons of Rama the science of vocal and instrumental music and that they sang the praises of their illustrious father. The Mahabharatha teems with many instances of music and musicians in the service of the Pandavas. Although the seven notes of the scale were introduced by the ancient Hindu sages very early, the leading note (*ni*) seems to have been one of the later introductions into the modern European music. It is said, "In many scales, both of civilized and barbarous people, it has found no place." The use of the leading note became common only during the middle ages.

Captain Day says, "From what we know of the science, it appears to have attained a theoretical precision yet unknown to Europe, at a period when even Greeks were little removed from barbarism. The inspirations of the bards of the first ages were all set to music and the children of the most powerful potentates sang the episodes of the great epics of Valmeeki and Vyasa. The Geetha Govinda, the Indian Song of songs, is music itself from beginning to end. It is difficult to imagine imagery more vivid, to picture scenes more charming, that those in which Krishna, with his fair Gopi companions, on the banks

of the Yamuna, played and sang those witching strains that, like those of Orpheus, held all creation spell-bound." There is sufficient evidence to believe that at an early date foreign nations were attracted by the splendid achievement of the Hindus in the musical art. Such was their intellectual fame that, according to Apuleius, Pythagoras visited the Chaldeans and then "the Brahmanes of India." Plato was prevented by wars in Asia from visiting the Magi and the Indians. Weber says, "From the high planes of Asia, where many ancient historical traces of it are found, it followed man in his wanderings through China, India and Egypt. Like the light of the day round the globe, musical enlightenment moved from East to West, from the ancient Chinese, Hindus, Assyrians, and Babylonians to the Egyptians, the Hebrews, Greeks and Romans". "Whether the ancient Greeks made any employment of Raga is not known, but it seems extremely probable, since they attributed the greater part of their science of music to India, that most Eastern nations still employ either Raga or its equivalent." Says another writer, "Again, the European theory of music had not made any essential advance in the 14th and 15th centuries, if we except the study of harmony, which never found favour with the Orientals. Hence the Europeans of those days could teach the Orientals nothing that they did not already know better than themselves, except some imperfect rudiments of harmony which they did not want. There is much more reason, I think, for asking whether the imperfect fragments of the natural system which we find among the Alexandrine Greeks, do not depend on Persian traditions, and also, whether the Europeans in the time of the Crusades did not learn much music from the Orientals. It is very probable that they brought the lute-shaped instruments with finger-boards and the bowed-instruments from the East. In the construction of tonal modes we might

especially instance the use of the leading-note, which we have here found existing in the East and which at that time also began to figure in the Western Music." Sir William Hunter says, "A regular system of notation had been worked out long before the age of Panini (350 b. c.) and the seven notes were designated by their initial letters. This notation passed from the Brahmins through the Persians to Arabia and was thence introduced into European music by Guido d'Arezzo at the beginning of the 11th century. Some indeed suppose that our modern word Gamut comes not from the letter Gamma, but from the Indian word *Gama* in Prakrit, in Sanskrit, *Gramma*, literally a musical scale." The antiquity of Hindu music is further established by the fact that Hindus were very early acquainted with the use of stringed instruments. It is said that "the contrivance of giving to stringed instruments a neck or finger-board by which one string can be made to produce a series of notes by the pressure of the different fingers, was totally unknown to the Greeks. This method of increasing the powers of stringed instruments was one of the circumstances which contributed most essentially to the advancement of modern music." If this is so, the Hindus had already known this contrivance thousands of years ago. Seeing that the different modes employed by the Greeks resemble the Moorchanas of the Hindu music, and that also some of their modern airs are in the scale of the Hindu Maya-malava-goula, it is not unlikely that the Greeks had early borrowed them from the Hindus.

Let us next examine the assertion of Mr. Herbert Spencer that "the Hindus seem never to have advanced beyond recitation". With all due deference to his deep erudition, one cannot help surmising that it was his want of acquaintance with Hindu music, ancient or modern, that has led the acute philosopher to hazard a guess of this sort. Probably, he was misled by accounts

of the Hindus given by casual observers who had little or no opportunity to hear the classical music of India, except "modern ditties sung by ill-instructed, screaming dancing-women." The testimony of several of the Oriental scholars who made a life-long study of the literature of the Hindus tends to show that their advancement in the direction of music was an achieved fact long before any of the sister nations attained anything like civilization. We are prepared to grant that the Vedic chants are forms of recitation. But, to say that Hindu music has not progressed beyond this stage betrays a profound ignorance of their science. Music was to Hindus not only an art but a science. Captain Day observes, "Music has there (in India) been developed to a degree far greater than has been generally recognised in Europe. It is there felt to be a means of passionate expression, such as is apparently unknown, amongst nations further East. And indeed, the very soul of all Indian music may be said to be Raga which, in its literal sense, means *that which creates passion.*" Another writer observes, "The Hindu chromatic scale, from which the numerous modes and melody-types are selected, does not appear to differ from our own. As there is no harmony, slight differences may pass without notice. Very much of Hindu music impresses the European as being in the minor scale ; but deflections in the stringed instruments, and possible accommodations in the wind, introduce an enharmonic elaboration that defies notation." If such music is not considered as having advanced beyond the stage of recitation, why then, the whole of European music has not advanced any further ! If true music tends to soften and purify the mind, the capability of Hindu music in this direction is unquestioned. If music is "the art which we most enjoy when gathered together socially and which is comprehended by a thousand at once", the Hindu

system can most justifiably claim equality with any other system ancient or modern. If the test of music is to afford "the greatest happiness to the greatest number", we have the testimony of an Englishman qualified to speak authoritatively on the subject, who says "For, this music, let us remember, daily gives pleasure to as many thousands as its more cultivated European sister gives to hundreds".

Mr. Spencer himself admits that not only men of different races but also different men of the same race and even the same men at different periods of life have different standards of taste. Illustrations of the relativity of tastes as furnished by the sentient world are innumerable. "Here human flesh is abhorred and there regarded as the greatest delicacy ; the whale's blubber which one race devours with avidity, will in another by its very odour produce nausea. Asafœtida, which by us is singled out as typical of the disgusting in odour, ranked among the Esthonians as a favourite perfume." Every one has heard of the common saying that one man's meat is another man's poison. As with individuals, so is it the case with the æsthetic habits of nations. It is said that, " Sounds sweet in themselves and sweet in their combinations, which yield to unfatigued ears intense pleasure, become, at the end of a long concert not only wearisome but, if there is no escape from them, causes of irritation." While such is the case with one and the same individual, how much more varied should be the tastes of nations who are born and bred in entirely different climes and under entirely different influences ? To judge of one nation by the standard of another is the act of an unfair and unreasonable partisan, whose field of vision is confined to very narrow limits. In all these circumstances, allowance must be made for the conditions of acquirement. Prof. Max Muller observes, "We must

not neglect to make full allowance for that very important intellectual parallax which renders it most difficult for a western observer to see things and thoughts under exactly the same angle and in the same light as they would appear to an eastern eye. A symphony of Beethoven would be mere noise to an Indian ear, and Indian Sangita seems to us without melody, harmony or rhythm." An Indian air may be devoid of harmony to the cultivated European ear. But he should also consider in what estimation his own music is held by the Hindus. In this case both may be right and both may be wrong, right in appreciating one's own music to the detriment of the other and wrong in not taking into account the relative appreciation of tastes. Sir William Hunter says, "The contempt with which Europeans in India regard it (Hindu Music) merely proves their ignorance of the system on which the Hindu Music is built up." Captain Day thinks, "But, it is hardly fair that an art so little really understood, even among the natives of India themselves, should be judged by such a criterion and then put aside as worthless, because solitary individuals have been deceived by parties of outcast charlatans whose object is mere gain. For, that Indian Music is an art and a very intricate and difficult one too, can hardly be denied. But, to appreciate it one must first put away all thought of European Music, and then judge of it by an Indian standard, and impartially upon its own merits—of the ingenuity of the performer—the peculiar rhythm of the music—the extraordinary scales used—the recitatives—the amount of imitation—the wonderful execution and memory of the performer and his skill in employing small interval as grace."

Different systems seem to have been in vogue in the early days such as the Archika, Gathika, Samika and Swarantara &c. Narada, one of the earliest authorities on

Hindu music thus defines these systems in the *Siksha* which bears his name. He says that the Archika recognises the employment of one swara ; the Gathika, two ; the Samika, three : the Swarantara, 4 ; Oudava, 5 ; Shadava, 6 ; and Sampurna, 7. In modern music, any scale recognizing less than four swaras, is inadmissible, except those in which there is an occasional employment of four swaras either in ascending or in descending. The Vedic writers recognised but three swaras, Udattha, Anudattha and Swaritha. Interpreted in the modern phraseology, in Udattha are to be found Nishada and Gandhara ; Rishabha and Dhiavatha in Anudattha ; and Shadja, Madhyama and Panchama, in Swaritha. The chief of the modern systems are those that were propounded by Elswara, Bharatha, Kallinatha, Hanuman and Narada. Of these, Hanuman's and Narada's are the only two which are now followed, the former in the Northern India and the latter in the South.

The scope of the Hindu music is extensive and sufficiently comprehensive. Some of the subjects treated of may seem to a foreigner entirely out of place in treatises on music. To the ancient Hindus, the science of music did not convey the simple idea of vocal and instrumental music, but them the conception of the treatment of all the subjects that were directly, or indirectly concerned with musical sound. Hence it is that, under the comprehensive term *Sangita*, vocal and instrumental music and dancing and gesture were included. Some prefer to restrict the use of the word to vocal and instrumental music only. According to the more ancient usage of the term, the Hindu music comprehends the seven musical tones, with their subdivisions, melody, measures, with the manner of beating time, dancing, rules of musical composition, expression and gesture, and the method of playing on the different instruments. The modern method, however,

is so entirely different from the ancient one that it has estranged dancing and gesture as being alien to it. Modern music has very widely diverged from ancient music. Even in the Sangita Ratnakara, two systems had been recognised, one of which was even then becoming obsolete. These were the Margi and the Desi systems. The Margi was the older of the two. In this system a strict adherence to rules was insisted upon, irrespective of the consequences of affecting the ear pleasurabley or otherwise. This system was supposed to have been primarily taught by Brahma to Bharatha. With regard to this system, no traces exist excepting the mention of it as having been prevalent in a remote period. This may have been one of those obsolete systems which died a natural death on account of its rigid conformity to rules and its consequent want of sympathy with the latitudinarian habits of the masses, whose primary test of music is to be affected pleasurabley. The Desi system, on the other hand, was more in touch with the people. It was greatly patronised on account of the facilities afforded by it. According to the definition given of it, it appears that it was not one recognised system ; but the different modes of singing popular in different countries, constituted the Desi.

To the ancient Hindu musicians, a knowledge of the physiology of the human body was essential for the true understanding of music. Accordingly, we find long dissertations on human physiology in works on music. In long digressions, they give elaborate descriptions of the several parts of the human body and the functions performed by them. They trace the development of the foetus from the first month of its conception and carefully describe the several changes undergone by it during its prenatal stage. The formation and the development of the vocal chords are next treated of in minute details. The ori-

gin and production of sound in the human body is thus described. The soul, desirous of speaking out its intention, excites the mind, and the mind operates upon the vital heat of the body. This vital heat sets the airs in the body in motion and the airs remaining in the lungs rise up and produce sound through the navel, the heart, the neck, the head and the throat. Vital air (*i.e.*,) the air in the lungs, grows hot by compression and receiving an expansive motion forces its way through the larynx above the wind-pipe and by the tension of the vocal chords thus occasioned are produced rapid vibrations of the chords, giving rise to the various tones of the voice. Five different nadas (sounds) are also recognised as being produced in the navel, the heart, the throat, and the face. But, for the scientific purpose of music, only three kinds are admitted. They are the mandra, madhya and tara, according to the organs from which they proceed. The first is the chest voice ; second, the throat ; and the third, the high or the head voice. These are the ground-work of music. Mention is also made of certain nadas which are however summarily dispensed with, as being peculiarly indulged in by Yoga-philosophers and as being repulsive to the ordinary human ear.

The Hindu musicians divided the octave into twenty-two intervals, called Srutis. Sruti is the smallest interval of musical sound audible by the ear. "They are the essential elements in the formation of the tones of which Saptaka or the octave is composed. They vary in quality or intensity according to the places of their origin ; *viz.*, the chest, the throat and the head ; those of the throat vibrating twice as rapidly and being consequently twice as intense as these similar ones of the chest ; and what holds true of this, holds also true of the rest." Different writers on music have divided the octave differently. Viswavasu, an early writer, recognised but two srutis ; some, three, these identifying

sruti with pitch. Others recognised sixty. A few suppose that srutis are of an infinite number. But the usually recognised are the twenty srutis. These are supposed to be generated by the contact of external air with twenty-two Nadis or nerves which are supposed to be connected with the Sushumna. These srutis form the groundwork on which Hindu music is built. Swaras take their origin from srutis. To each swara is allotted a number of srutis. A major tone has four ; a minor, three ; and a semitone, two. Among the saptaka or group of seven notes, Shadja, Madhyama and Panchama (or the tonic, the fourth and the fifth) have each four srutis ; Rishabha and Dhaivata (*i.e.*, the second and the sixth) have each three ; and Gandhara and Nishadha (the third and the seventh) have each two.

From these srutis, three scales are formed, Shadja, Madhyama, and Gandhara. These are called Gramas, the word which has given birth to the word Gamut. The Shadah and the Madhyama gramas differ but slightly in the number of srutis allotted to *pa* (the fifth), four being allotted to it in the former scale and three in the latter scale. In the modern phraseology, "The Shadja Grama consists of two tetrachords similar to each other and separated by a major tone, nearly our diatonic scale. The Madhyama Grama is formed from the preceding by a transposition of the major tone between *pa* and *dha*, and of a minor tone between *dha* and *ni*, precisely our diatonic major scale." The Gandhara Grama is supposed to be peculiar to the celestials. Some authors have studiously omitted any explanation of the above for the foregoing reason. It has however given a world of troubles to earnest students of music. Its description as given in various books is different. The Sangita Parijata says that in this Grama, Nishada has four Srutis and Shadja, three. Sangita Ratnakara says

that Shadja has three srutis; Rishabha, three srutis; Gandhara, four srutis ; Panchama, three srutis ; Dhaivata, three srutis and Nishada, four srutis. According to Mr. Paterson, quoted by Day, there are four srutis to *sa* ; two to *ri* ; three to *ga* ; four to *ma* ; two to *pa* ; four to *dha* ; and three to *ni*. It appears that this is the explanation given in the Sangeeta Darpana. As the scale has long been obsolete for want of melody and musical persuasiveness, a consideration of it in its details seems unnecessary. These three Gramas are also understood in a different light. These are supposed to be the different ways of taking the tonic as the basis of singing. Accordingly Shadja Grama is the one wherein *sa* is the tonic or key-note ; the Madhyama is the one wherein the fourth of the last scale is taken as the tonic ; the Gandhara is the one wherein the third note of the second octave is taken as the tonic. From this it will be observed that the third Grama having the tonic in such a high pitch to begin with, is impossible of good execution. Hence it is supposed to be best suited to the Gandharvas, a class of celestials in the Hindu Mythology. For this reason, this scale is otherwise known as Gandharva Grama. As regards this system of srutis, it is remarked by an able writer that "this system of twenty-two possesses these remarkable properties ; it has both fifths and thirds considerably better than any other cyclical system having so low a number of notes. For the purposes of the Hindus, where no stress is laid on the harmony, the system is already so perfect that improvement could hardly be expected." Mr. Bosanquet observes, "That the fifths and thirds produced by dividing the octave into twenty-two intervals do not deviate very widely from the exact intervals which are the foundation of the diatonic scale." It should be observed here that Hindu Music does not suppose the equality of the srutis.

From the srutis, Suddha and Vikrithi notes are formed. Suddha notes are those which have the full complement of srutis. "The native musicians ;" says an English musician, "have not only the chromatic but even the second enharmonic genus; for they unanimously reckon twenty-two srutis or quarters and thirds of a tone in their octave." This enharmonic or chromatic scale results from the division of the octave into Suddha and Vikrithi swaras. Sarngadeva, the author of the Sangita Ratnakara makes mention of twelve Vikrithi notes. Most of the Hindu musicians are agreed in adopting this division, except Somanatha, the author of Raga-vibodha, who speaks of only seven Vikrithis. It may be pointed out, however, that he bases his objection on the identical nature of some of the Vikrithis as given by the more ancient schools of musicians. The one division which is now in common use is that of Hanuman, who is reputed to be one of the greatest authorities on Hindu music. In this system, *sa* and *pa* do not undergo any changes ; *ri* is of three kinds, Suddha, Chatu-sruti, and Shat-sruti ; *ga* is also of three kinds, Suddha, Sadharana and Antara; *ma*, of two kinds, Suddha, and Prati; *dha*, of three kinds, Suddha, Chatu-sruti and Shatsruti ; and *ni*, of three kinds, Suddha, Kaisiki and Kakali. In this classification, Chatusruti and Shatsruti Rishabas are identical with Suddha and Sadharana Gandharas ; and Chatusruti and Shatsruti Dhaivathas, with Suddha and Kaisiki Nishadas. This scale does not differ materially from the European scale. On this Sir William Jones observes, "I tried in vain to discover in practice any difference between the Indian scale and that of our own ; but knowing my ear to be very insufficiently exercised, I requested a German professor of music to accompany on his violin a Hindu lutenist, who sang by note some popular airs on the loves of Krishna and Radha, and he assured me that the scales were the same ; and Mr. Shore afterwards informed

me that when the voice of a native singer was in tune with his harpsichord, he found the Hindu series of seven notes to ascend like ours—by a sharp third."

We have now come to the most important portion of Hindu music, namely the consideration of Ragas or melody-types. Here the ancient system differs from the modern one to a considerable extent. Before going into this subject, we shall give some account of the notes or swaras which are indispensable in the composition of Ragas. These swaras are divided into four kinds, *viz.*, Vadi, Samvadi, Anuvadi and Vivadi. Of these the first is the most important in a Raga. It is also called Amsa Swara. As the note best calculated to bring out the characteristics of a Raga, it must be frequently repeated and emphasized. The Samvadi is the note which accompanies the Vadi without marring its effect. The Vivadi note, on the other hand, is that which, by its position in relation to the Vadi, diminishes the effect of the Raga in which it is employed. The rest are called Anuvadi. These four kinds of notes are compared to a king, minister, enemy and servant, according to the part each plays towards the others. The last three seem to correspond to Homophonia, Paraphonia and Antiphonia of the Greeks. A determination of "the succession and state of the notes composing a Raga" is called the Moorchana. It is defined as the ascending and descending of notes in order. These are classified according to the Gramas to which they belong. Sir William Jones says, "That the twenty-one Moorehanas belonging to the three Gramas are no more than seven pieces of diapason multiplied by three, according to the difference of pitch in the compass of the three octaves." The early Greeks seem to have had scales similar to these Moorchanas. "It ought to be added that the Greeks, in order to increase the musical resources of their scale, also formed from it several different scales

which are distinguished from the first only by the point of departure. Suppose the scale written in the order *C, D, E, F, G, A, B.* Any note whatever may be taken as a starting point and the scale formed, *e. g., E, F, G, A, B, C, D,* or *A, B, C, D, E, F, G.*

Before proceeding to explain the ancient system of Ragas and Reginis, it may be desirable to give a short account of certain preliminary technicalities, without which the characteristics of a Raga may not be clearly intelligible. Before a Raga is learned to be sung with accuracy, certain combinations of notes, called Alankaras, are required to be studied as a useful exercise in the beginning and as an indispensable aid to a knowledge of solmization in due course. They are divided into four classes comprised under Sthayi, Arohi, Avarohi and Sanchari Varnas. The Sthayi Varna is that in which a note is repeated with pauses in the middle; the Arohi is the ascending of notes; the Avarohi, the descending of notes; and the Sanchari combines all the three processes. Such Alankaras are manifold in number. Various authors have exhausted their ingenuity in permuting and combining the notes in the form of Alankaras. The Sangita Ratnakara gives sixty-three Alankaras and the Raga Vibodha, thirty-five. These are calculated to impress the beginner with the magnitude and relationship of notes. These combined with elementary Thalas (measures of time) to this day form the invariable exercise of beginners in music. Next there are the Nyasa, Graha and Amsa-swaras which explain the nature of a Raga. The Nyasa is that which ends a Gita and Graha that which begins one. Amsa-swara is the tonic or key-note. It is the note which is essential to a Raga and which, by its graceful repetition in singing, shows a Raga to its best advantage. The conception of a fundamental note in a piece of music dates from an early

time. It is said that "this idea did not exist in Greek music, the Greek music ending on the dominant, instead of the tonic." Helmholtz observes, "The Indians also hit upon the conception of a *tonic*, although their music is likewise adopted for one voice only. They called the tonic *Amsa*."

The most important portion of the Hindu music is taken up with a consideration of Ragas, the nature of their formation, their development and the manner in which they should be sung. A Raga is defined to be a melodic succession or any combination of notes tending to produce a pleasurable effect on the mind of the hearer. The word literally means *that which creates passion*. Raga forms the means of passionate expression or *rakti*. Ragas are primarily divided into Oudava, Shadava and Sampoorna, according as five, six or seven notes go to form the scale. Each of these is again sub-divided into Suddha, Chayalaga, and Sankeerna. Suddha Ragas are those which conform rigidly to the rules laid down for singing them. Chayalaga Ragas are those which, by their combining with other Ragas, tend to give pleasure. Sankeerna Ragas are those which partake of the nature of both the above. As regards the names and characteristics of these Ragas, the ancient music has greatly diverged from the modern. In fact different authors have pointed out different ways and given different names, the variegated character of which has puzzled the modern reader. But all agree in adopting the system of Ragas and Reginis. In their usual metaphorical language, they divide the melody-types into *Ragas*, which are supposed to be masculine, and *Reginis* which are supposed to be their wives. There are also Putra-Ragas and Dooti-Ragas which are respectively their children and messengers. It does not appear what led the early writers to this fanciful classification. Perhaps they are calculated

to show the relationship between the various Ragas, and their functions. Mathanga enumerates only twenty Ragas. Others make mention of six Ragas and thirty-six Reginis. Hanuman gives a different list. At least in Southern India, these have become entirely obsolete and no one ever dreams of resuscitating any of these. It may be useful to mention here that the classification of Ragas into Oudava, Shadava and Sampoorna is made with some object in view. It is supposed that the Sampoorna Ragas are adapted to the sentiments of heroism and love ; the Shadava, are calculated to infuse spirit into warriors on the battle-field ; and the Oudava tend to cure diseases, free one from his enemies and assuage fear and sorrow.

The modern music, on the other hand, is very extensive in its range and unlimited in scope. The classification of Ragas is based on the chromatic division of the scale. All Ragas are divided into those belonging to Suddha-madhyama group (perfect-fourth) and Prati-madhyama group (augmented fourth). By an ordinary process of calculation, the eight semi-tones and quarter-tones (excluding the tonic, the fifth and the two-fourths above-mentioned, which are invariable) can be combined in thirty-six ways. These combined with Suddha-madhyama would constitute the thirty-six Suddha-madhyama ragas. The other thirty-six are combined with Prati-madhyama, making a total of seventy-two-Ragas. These seventy-two Ragas are called Melakarthas or parent Ragas. From each of these several take their origin. All the Ragas having been classified as Oudava, Shadava and Sampoorna, according as they are composed of five, six or seven notes, we can exactly determine the number of Ragas derived from a parent Raga. The number is four-hundred and eighty-four. This is arrived at in the following way. The nature of a Raga is known by its ascending and descending modes. The ascending and descending modes may

be composed of five, six or seven swaras. The ascending mode of seven swaras may be combined with the descending one or seven, six, or five. Similarly the ascending mode of six may be combined with the descending one of seven, six or five and in the same manner that of five may be combined with the above. This is now reduced to a simple process of calculation. In order to get all the combinations of six swaras (excluding the tonic) we have simply to find the number of combinations of six taken five at a time, which will give us six. To get all the combinations of five swaras, find the number of combinations of six taken four at a time, which gives fifteen. First there is the Sampoorna scale. Combining this (ascending) with the six Shadava modes (descending), we get six ; combining the same with the fifteen Oudava modes, we get fifteen. Again taking the Shadava mode (ascending) and combining it with one Sampoorna (descending), we get six ; combining with the six descending, we get thirty-six; combining with the fifteen of the Oudava modes (descending), we get ninety. Combining the fifteen modes of the Oudava with one of Sampoorna (descending), we get fifteen ; combining with six of the Shadava modes we get ninety and with the fifteen of the Oudava, we get two-hundred and twenty-five. The sum of all these will give four-hundred and eighty-four as remarked above. If this principle of combination were strictly observed, we should have only 72×484 or 34848 Ragas in all. But other Ragas called Vikrithi Ragas are also recognised for their melodic sweetness. Some of these have four for ascending or descending scales and many inversions too are allowed. A performance of these is generally difficult. In this connection we may state that, for the sake of facilitating a remembrance of the number of each Melakartha, a sort of mnemonical aid is

supplied, which is very ingenious in itself. This is worked out by attaching certain values to the letters of the alphabet. It is not desirable here to give a detailed account of this process, as the same is one of practical interest.

We shall next proceed to ascertain the mode of singing Ragas and the style of their execution. The singing of a Raga is called an Alapa. This consists in the fullest extension permissible of a Raga, bringing out its characteristics into full relief. By this process a performer is enabled to exhibit his fullest skill at harmonious combination and his accurate knowledge of the Amsa and Vadi notes particular to a Raga and its Moorchanas. Captain Willard says, "An Alapa is a rhapsodical embellishment." Captain Day observes that an Alapa is "a kind of rhapsody, which abounds with grace and embellishments of all kinds, and is formed by an extension, according to the Moorchana, of the notes of the Raga, in such a way that all the characteristics of that Raga are prominently shewn, and scope is given to the performer's power of improvising."

Separate seasons, and portions of the day are set apart to certain Ragas. As the subject is only of historical interest to us, the details of it seem unnecessary. Suffice it to say that there is not a single singer of any originality who addicts to the rules laid down, except a few of the most conservative type who do not keep pace with the times and who have, in consequence, sacrificed taste, originality of conception and pleasure, to a misplaced patriotism which avers, "whatever is, is right." These persons are incapable of appreciating change of any kind, but insist upon adhering to rules prescribed at a time when music was free from all the complexities which the present advanced state of things implies. The subject of Ragas is generally closed by an explanation of the sentiments peculiar to and supposed to be inherent in Ragas.

What is the nature of the effects produced on the human mind by notes or melodious successions of notes or in the modern phraseology, keys? What kind of influence do the notes, apart from the words with which they are associated, have on us? These questions have been answered variously by different nations. In the mythological ages, the notes were thought to be presided over by deities who were swayed by particular sentiments. Later on, different effects were considered to be produced upon the human mind by different notes. By the early Hindu Musicians, heroism, wonder and terror were attributed to *sa* and *ri* (*C* and *D*) ; compassion, to *ga* and *ni* (*E* and *B*) ; humour and love to *ma* and *pa* (*F* and *G*) ; disgust and alarm, to *dha* (*A*). Whereas according to the European system, the first is the strong tone ; the second, the hopeful or the amusing tone ; the third, the steady, calm tone ; the fourth, the desolate or awe-inspiring tone ; the sixth, the weeping or sorrowful tone ; the seventh, the sensitive or the piercing tone. Among the Chinese, *F* (*ma*) was the emperor, full of majesty ; *G* (*pa*) the minister, powerful and commanding ; *A* (*dha*) the obedient nation, meek and mild ; *C* (*sa*) the business of the state, quick and energetic ; *D* (*ri*) the universe, brilliant and magnificent. With this nomenclature may be compared the Hindu classification of notes as Vadi, Samvadi, Anuvadi and Vivadi, corresponding to a king, minister, slave and enemy, according to the part played by them in the composition of notes.

From the foregoing, it will be clear that different sentiments are attributed to the notes by different nations. If there were any basis for this other than a sentimental one, surely there would be a concensus of opinion which will deserve some respect. It is quite true that musical notes sung have a very soothing effect on the mind, as contrasted with mere noises. But, to say that they ar-

capable of producing specific feelings, seems to be on the very face of it, an unwarranted assumption. "Music considers sounds with reference to the pleasurable feelings which they are calculated to excite in us." The impression produced is a vaguely pleasant one, one on which the mind is pleased to dwell without experiencing any definite emotion. The Hindu Musicians have even gone the length of attributing Rasas or sentiments to Ragas. These are said to be expressive of certain peculiar sentiments such as sorrow, love, fear, pity, terror. Whether Ragas can produce any of these feelings, apart from the words they are connected with, is very doubtful. This idea is, however, very old and that which has given rise to this fanciful impression seems to be the words themselves to which music is set. The language used stirs up in our mind certain feelings, which are wrongly transferred to Ragas. The early Greeks similarly attributed feelings to their "modes." The Doric mode (our Hanuma-thodi) was grand, solemn and warlike; the Phrygian (Khara-hara-priya) was religious, spirited and passionate ; the Lydian (Dheera Sankarabharana) was plaintive and luxurious ; the Æolian (Nata-bhairavi) was of a grand and peaceful character. Among us, Bhoopali, Manjari, Bhairavi, Nata, Malava and Sreeraga are supposed to create respectively feelings of beauty, kindness, anger, valour, fear and grandeur. And Ragas derived from any of the above are said to possess the same inherent qualities. Poet Schubert quoted by Schumann, "calls E minor a girl dressed in white with a rose-coloured breast-knot. In G minor he finds discontent, discomfort, worrying anxiety about an unsuccessful plan, ill-tempered gnawing at the bit." In ancient Hindu music, which divided melody-types into Ragas and Reginis, the Ragas are severally described as persons fond of floral surroundings, bedecked with the thin sprouts of mango-

leaves, wearing red apparel ; and the Raginis, as their consorts, indulging in vernal sports, singing in accompaniment to Vina, dressed in green, sensuous, and fond of scents.

Religious hymns are believed by the religious to be capable of producing holy emotions. A warrior finds in stirring war-songs the element of heroism which, he supposes, is due to the music they are set to. A moonstricken lover in whom nothing but love is predominant, admires the love-depicting songs solely for the effect which the music inspires. Whatever may be the emotions which music gives rise to, it will be seen from a close examination of the language employed in songs that music considered by itself is incapable of producing any specific sentiments. The plaintive, stirring or amorous character of the language employed tends severally to excite those feelings. A test of this will be found in variation and transposition. Let the music of a given war-song be set to words depicting love. Then the same composition of notes which was supposed to produce emotions of heroism, would now be found exactly suited to produce feelings of an amorous character, thereby showing the futility of believing in the emotional character of music considered *per se*.

Schumann suggests, "A good idea would be to compare the predominant character of classic master works set in the same keys, in order to discover whether or not a stereotyped character had or had not gradually established itself in each key during various epochs. The major mode is the active manly principle ; the minor, the suffering, the feminine. Simple feelings demand simple keys, the more complicated ones require those that more rarely meet the ear." "The union of music to words," says a musical writer, "is most important, because words can represent the cause of the frame of mind, the object to which it refers, and the feeling

which lies at its root, while music expresses the kind of mental transition which is due to feeling." Another writer observes, "That music does not express determinate sentiments ; however, it is applicable to certain states of mind from which a special sentiment may arise. That this is the case is easily seen from instrumental music ; the determinate sentiment is added by means of words united with music. But if the words be taken away or modified in meaning, it will be seen that the same melody and the same music may be adopted to widely different sentiments."

In this connexion, the following may be quoted. Mr. W. H. Hadow in his "Studies in modern music" writes, "Far more important is the influence of association. There is no reason *in rerum natura* why the minor mode should be sad, but our first ancestors noticed that a cry sank in tone as the power of its utterance failed, and hence established a connexion between depression of note and waning strength. So began an association of ideas to which by transmission and inheritance, the pathos of our minor keys is mainly due. Again, the bass naturally suggests gravity and earnestness, because that is the case with the speaking voice. 'No man of real dignity,' says Aristotle, 'could ever be shrill of speech' ; and similarly, when we look for serious or dignified music, we expect to find same prominence given to its lowest register. Much too of this association is due to the motions of our ordinary life—the force that strikes like a blow in the first phrase of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony ; the agitation so often expressed by rapid and irregular movement ; the broken voices at the end of the Funeral March in the Eroica ; and others of similar kind. Of course music cannot define any specific emotional state : it is far too vague and indeterminate to be regarded as an articulate language ; but it undoubtedly can suggest and adumbrate general types of emotion, either

by producing their sensuous conditions, or by presenting same form of phrase which we can connect by association with our own experience."

From an early period the device of employing grace notes has been adopted by Hindus. Several that were then used have, however, long fallen into desuetude and new graces suited to new exigencies have taken their place. The remarkable divergence of the music of different nations would seem to be due to the varied character of graces that were invented by them as dictated by the concurrent development of the music of the different periods. As in the case of music generally, the appreciation of graces seems to be only relative. Those that are highly appreciated by some appear harsh to others, while they revel in the thrilling influences of their own. The line of development a system of music takes will determine the nature of the graces invented to suit it. This is what we find in the different systems of music. The distinctive advance of European music has been the means of differentiating the graces peculiar to melody from those peculiar to harmony. The peculiar character of Hindu music, whose basis is melody, has from a very early period, devised what are called Gamakas. The theory of Gamakas has been very elaborately worked out by the ancient Hindu writers. They regard them as indispensable adjuncts to Ragas. A Gamaka is such a slight 'shaking' of notes which is calculated to please the ear of an auditor. In the Hindu music a plain singing of notes without Gamaka, is not deemed to be a good performance, whereas the skill of a good scientific musician consists in such a manipulation of notes as is consistent with the use of the Gamakas allowed for a Raga. It will be observed by any one acquainted with the theory of srutis that, by means of Gamakas a latitude is allowed

to swaras which are thus enabled to touch the adjacent srutis without tending to mar the effect of the Raga of which they form the scale. The Gamakas improve the Raga by allowing a free scope. Without the help of Gamakas a Raga will be but a dry combination of notes. It has been said that Gamakas are "the methods by which the different notes are varied or follow each other." This is hardly a good definition, as the chief purpose of a Gamaka is not merely variation or succession.

It has been very pithily remarked that "Time is the element of music, the stream in which the tones live and cease to live." Time plays a very important part in the music of every nation. The advance made in this direction by the Hindus is sufficiently indicative of their appreciation of it. Thala was likened to the goad by which the elephant Thouryathrika (a collective name for Nritha, Vadya and Gita—dancing, vocal and instrumental music) is controlled. Says a writer, "While the modern measures of Europe are exclusively in common time and triple time and their compounds, the Hindus have beautiful melodies with five, seven, and other unequal members of time or beats in a measure and plenty of musicians to perform them." Thala, like Ragas, is divided into Margi and Desi. Of the Margi mode of keeping time, we have a few specimens showing the fact that it was prevalent some remote ages ago. The Desi, by its appealing to the immediate pleasure of men in general, has been more popular. A Thala results from the combination of Kala (time), Kriya (action—beating of hands to indicate time) and Mana (interval or pauses between beats). Minute directions are given as to the manner in which the different durations of time are to be measured. The early musicians have laid down that there are ten Pranas or indispensable factors which go to make up a

Thala, such as Kala, Marga, &c. In the ancient Hindu music, several thalas seem to have been in use. The most important of these were the Chanchatputa group. In later days another set of Thalas was employed. These were numbered at one hundred and twenty. Captain Day thinks, "To judge by the very complicated nature of many of these Thalas, and the fact that they vary widely in almost all the authorities, it seems hardly likely that they were ever in very common use ; but they are nevertheless interesting as showing the great variety of rhythm that can be produced by such simple means as beating the two hands together—the earliest kind of rhythmical accompaniment."

The modern system recognises but seven Thalas, each being sub-divided into five Jatis or kinds, so that thirty-five distinct measures are supposed to be in use. I say 'supposed,' because even from among these only a few are the most frequently employed. Now and then a skilled musician who has a steady control over keeping time, indulges in some of the rare Thalas by way of exhibition of his skill. The Thalas that are most common are the Adi, the Thriputa, the Roopaka, and the Jhampa.

We have now traversed the major portion of the Science of Hindu Music. It remains for us to lay before the reader the progress made in instrumental music. Before taking up this subject, we shall digress a little and devote some space to a consideration of the ingenious and interesting mathematical manipulation of the seven swaras which the early musicians indulged in. It is said that, in the Middle Ages, Ars Musica was studied in the books of Boëthius, which were replete with "a pedantic repetition of mathematical forms and proportions, in keeping with the spirit of scholasticism and calculated to retard rather than advance the progress of the art." But the object with which the early Hindu musicians worked

out the mathematical combinations of notes seems certainly not to retard the progress but to assist the student in remembering a certain combination out of the innumerable ways which can be formed. Considering these processes by themselves, one cannot but admire the ingenuity of them who were not only good musicians but also able mathematicians. First they have laid down certain rules as to the way in which the seven swaras should be combined. This process is technically called Khanda-prastara. These are essential to a knowledge of the Moorchana-prastara. This process of combination cannot probably present much difficulty to a student of the modern day who has mastered the elements of Algebra. But to one in those days when the science of mathematics was studied by a microscopic minority, (as is the case even now among the orthodox) this process would have given immense trouble and the student would have been bewildered in the beginning for want of the bearing of this on Music.

Remembering that swaras are to be permuted in a given fixed way, the question suggested itself as to whether it is possible to pick up a certain combination in a proposed sum and conversely to tell the number of a given combination in a series. To put the thing in a more concrete shape, say in a Prastara of four swaras *sa, ri, ga, ma*, what is the nature of the nineteenth Prastara from the beginning, and conversely, what is the number of the prastara of the nature of *ga, ri, sa, ma*? Sarangadeva, the author of Sangita Ratnakara, solves the questions by the aid of the following diagram, with the figures as they are given. In this take as many perpendicular columns from the beginning as are indicated by the swaras to be combined. If it is a Prastara of four swaras, the first four columns should be taken and so forth. In the proposed question, taking the first four columns, choose such one figure from each

(including o) that the total may amount to 19. Obviously

1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	1	2	6	24	120	720
		4	12	48	240	1440
			18	72	360	2160
				96	480	2880
					600	3600
						4320

$18+0+0+1$ is 19 and no other set of numbers gives the required total. Write down *sa, ri, ga, ma*, in the usual order. 18 in the last column is the fourth from the top. In the series *sa, ri, ga, ma*, counting from the end, *sa* is the fourth. Next o is the first or topmost in the third column, *ga*, in the series is taken as it is and put to the left

of *sa*. Similarly *ri* and *ga*. Hence the required prastara *Sa, ri, ga, ma,* is *ri, ga, ma, sa*. To find the number of *Ga, ri, sa, ma* prastara we proceed thus. Write down the usual series and just below it the given Prastara whose number in the order is required. Counting from right to left, *ma* in the given Prastara is the first in the series. So we take from the fourth column, the topmost figure o ; now omitting *ma* from both, *sa* in the given Prastara, is the third in the series. So take four in the third column, being the third or lowest from the top. Omit *sa* from both ; *ri* in the given Prastara, is the second in the series, so take 1 the second in the second column. Omit *ri* from both ; *ga* alone remains in both. Take 1 in the first column. The total ($1+1+4+0$) is 6. The given Prastara is the sixth in order. These two processes are called *Nashta* and *Uddishta*. The very elegant working of the above is admirable. As have been remarked above, these are not essential to the study of music proper. Perhaps in the beginning it was intended that a Raga should be sung in the order of Prastara. To us, however, they are

simply of mathematical interest. A Raga sung in the order in which they can be combined will soon tire the patience of the hearer ; and consequently of all the combinations, only those that tend to bring out the essential characteristics of a Raga are admitted and sung. Although not of much practical utility, they are valuable to us as the achievements of our revered ancestors. It has been well remarked by Macaulay that “ a people which takes no pride in the noble achievements of remote ancestors, will never achieve anything worthy to be remembered by remote descendants with pride. It is a sentiment which essentially belongs to the higher and purer part of human nature, and which adds not a little to the strength of the states.” We shall absolve ourselves from this charge by a due appreciation of our ancestors’ achievements. In connection with the above, we may refer to a process known in English Music as *change-ringing*, which “ is the continual production of such changes—without any repetition—from the time the bells leave the position of rounds (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6) to the time they return to that position again.” This is supposed to have been in practice for the last two-hundred and fifty years. Two methods were employed. One was known as the Grandsire method and the other the Stedman method. The latter method closely resembles our own in so far as the combination of the notes is taken into consideration. The progress the Hindus made at an early date in this direction is very remarkable, seeing that in other countries, the process found its way but two, three centuries ago!

We have seen in the beginning what amount of progress the Hindus had made in the construction of musical instruments. In early days many instruments seem to have been invented but a great many lived but a short time and died a natural death for want of touch with the people. The early sacrificial rites had to be performed with the

accompaniment of instrumental music. We find in a *sruti*, quoted by Somanatha, the talented author of *Ragavibodha*, that "a Brahmin should sing to the accompaniment of another who played upon Vina." From the beginning, Vina seems to have been the most favorite instrument. Ten varieties of Vina are supposed to be in existence. Many of the modern instruments can be traced to a Sanskrit origin. "The violin, the flute, the oboe, the guitar, all have an eastern origin." The rebec, the parent of the violin and the fiddle, which was in use throughout Western Europe in the middle ages, it would appear, "was a form of the rabob brought to Spain by the Moors who in turn had derived it from Persia and Arabia. Here again the Aryan origin is evident, the rabob being, according to old Sanskrit works, a form of Vina. And it is still popular in the northern India and Afghanistan." The instrument known as Ravanastra or Ravanastrana which was the earliest one played with a bow may tend to illustrate the fact that the bowed instruments are of eastern origin. Captain Day goes the length of asserting that "the origin of the complicated pianoforte of the present day can be traced to the Aryans." That a very remarkable progress was early made is further shown by the fact that the construction of many of the musical instruments is based upon an accurate knowledge of the quality of the materials required for it.

All instruments are divided into the vibratory, percussive, pneumatic and concussive kind. These were called Thatha, Avanaddha, Sushira, and Ghana. The first comprised all stringed instruments; the next included instruments of percussion, such as drums, Mridanga, &c; the Sushira included wind-instruments such as flutes, conch-shell, horns, Murali, &c; and the Ghana, those made of brass and other metals such as cymbals, bells &c. The most popular instrument is the Vina of which, Captain Willard says,

"It is a really superior instrument in the hands of an expert performer and perhaps little inferior to a fine-toned piano and indeed for Hindustanee music, the best devised, and calculated to be adapted to all practical modifications." Of these, some are preferred in the north and others are exclusively played in the south.

The question has been very frequently raised if the Hindus had at any time any kind of symbols or notation for expressing their music in writing. It has been as frequently answered in the negative. We cannot assert, with any amount of accuracy, that they possessed a system anything like the present advanced system of European notation. It is indeed idle to expect a perfect system of notation from the Hindu music, for the simple reason that, its predominant element being simple melody, a highly-finished system was never sedulously cultivated. The history of notation is in many respects nothing but the history of the several changes which the written language of music has undergone concurrent with the development of music. Necessity calls forth the inventive faculties into prominent play, without which the highest genius slumbers. That the Hindus had a system of notation, though on a small scale, there is no doubt. For instance there are symbols to designate the sharps, flats, the double sharps and the double flats and to mark the pitches and octaves. They express the several notes by their initial letters, like the Greeks. They have symbols for short, long notes, half-notes and quater-notes. In all probability, they had other symbols which are unfortunately lost to us. Several causes might have contributed to the arrest of further development. The simple character of the melodies employed in those days would account for the paucity of symbols employed. It may be that the period of stagnation began from the time when hordes of foreigners spread havoc and

devastation into the country. In those days of turmoil and internal commotion resulting from the atrocities of the invaders, the little traces of anything surviving would have been lost. But even then there were Emperors of the type of Akbar who patronised letters and men of letters, during whose beneficial reign arts flourished and literary men encouraged in the pursuit of knowledge. Further the mode in which knowledge was imparted would account for the absence of any elaborate written musical language. Singing has always been imparted vocally and the student had to sit at the feet of the master for several years before the latter could part with some of his lore. An analogy to this will be found in the Vedic hymns which are being orally transmitted in several families. In fact the reading of hymns from the printed books is prohibited even to this day by the strictly orthodox. Even now musicians, unlike their brethren of the West, do not sing or play with books in hand. They commit everything to memory and they are ready at a moment's notice, without the aid of the paraphernalia of books, stands, stools, &c. But, if it be asked if the modern Hindu music does not stand in need of further development, I for one should most emphatically assert the necessity of more symbols employed. To some extent we may revive the old forms, but to a large extent there is no doubt that we shall have to devise new symbols for expressing the various graces. In this direction the modern Hindu music certainly requires much improvement."—From the Preface to *Gana Vidya Sanjeevini*.

VALMEEKI AND MUSIC.

The musical art which corresponded to the lively sensibility of the people was fostered under the benign care of enlightened royal patrons who were themselves great masters of the art. Vocal music is said to be the eldest

branch of the art of music, and recitations by bards commemorative of the exploits of heroes are a later development of vocal music. But such recitations which were intended to excite the close attention of the people, would naturally fall flat, if unaccompanied by instrumental music of some kind or other. We accordingly find that different varieties of the Veena had early become popular as an accompaniment just as the Lyre was the common accompaniment among the Greeks. But, at this distance of time, it is impossible to estimate precisely the true character of the music to which the Ramayana was set. Judging from the description of Valmeeki, it must have been of a very simple kind. There is no mention of the word Raga in the musical sense in the Ramayana. It is a peculiar growth of later times, as it is the peculiar growth of the land of its birth. Put in its place, a system of what were known as *Jathis* came to be early devised. We read that the twins Kusa and Lava sang the poem in such a way that the music was highly melodious, the time being varied not only in the three different kinds of movements, viz., *Druta*, *Madhya*, *Vilambita* (corresponding in modern phraseology to *presto*, *allegro* and *andante*) as the nature of the subject demanded, but also in the seven different *Jathis* (or as we would now call them Ragas or more precisely keys in the technical phraseology of the modern western music) and accompanied by the Veena with which it was in perfect tune. They were such great proficients in the art of music that they could with facility modulate from one note to another through several 'subordinate transitions' which touched the three keys or octaves. (Balakanda, IV, 8, 9). The mention of the word *Jathi* here is significant. The *Jathis* were at this time only seven in number, although Bharatha mentions eighteen different kinds of *Jathis*. (Bharatha-natya-sastra, p. 307).

Judging from the Geethas, specimens of which are given in the Sangeetha-rathnakara; a Geetha belonging to the *Shadji-jathi*, began with the note Shadja and ended on the same note ; in the *Arshabhi-jathi* the Geetha began with the note Ri, and ended on the same note and so forth. This system of transposition would be best calculated to introduce a variety of scales (which were at this stage confined to seven only) which were the foundation on which the huge edifice of the later system of Ragas was based. The Ramayana must be supposed to have been sung in these seven different *Jathis* which were varied according to the discretion of the singers, and which afforded facilities for varying qualities of melodic expression. Repeatedly encored by the learned Rishis who sat dumb-founded at the perfect execution of the singers (whose very speaking was as melodious as their singing (*Ib.* 11) and whose eyes were filled with tears of joy, they recited the story with such exquisite sweetness and in such an expressive way that every word was perfectly intelligible. The learned assembly complimenting them on the extensive repertoire of songs at their command, said 'Oh, you adepts in music ! this is the best of your songs, whose beauty is enhanced by the use of "agreeable chromatic intervals." (*Ib.* 15 to 28). In describing the music at the banquet of Bharadwaja, Valmeeki displays a rare knowledge of the science. While bands of Apsarasas danced, the celestial musicians sang, to the accompaniment of different kinds of stringed instruments which poured forth their dulcet sounds in such happy succession, that the harmony of the vocal and instrumental music was not only perfect (*Layagunavita*) but was executed in such a *pianissimo* style (*Slakshna*) and in neither too rapid or too slow movement (*Sama*) and in such an expressive manner (*Uccharita*) that all animated creation was spell

bound. (Ayodhya-kanda. Sar. 91, Sl. 26 and 27.) Such was the music which Valmeeki was never tired of describing in his own inimitable way. Few poets, ancient or modern, could approach him in his rare grasp of the subtleties of music, and in the happy manner of his description.

Instrumental music too seems to have been developed to a high degree of perfection. *Bheri*, *Dundubhi*, and *Mridanga* were big-sized kettle drums which were indispensable both in times of war and peace. They heralded royal processions, proclaimed state ceremonials, such as sacrifices, coronations, birth celebrations, and marriages. They announced the march of the armies of contending parties on the battle-field. Royal palaces reverberated incessantly with their deafening sounds. In the royal palace in Ayodhya, big kettle drums (*dundubhi*), were played with sticks made of gold at every *yama*—three hours—in the night (Ayodhya-kanda, Sar. 31, Sl. 2). They probably served the purpose of the hourgongs of the present day. *Mridanga* was of two kinds, the one a big-sized one played with sticks, (*Ib.* Sar. 71, Sl. 27½); and the other of a smaller kind, which was employed as an accompaniment to vocal music (Sundarakanda, X, 42). *Pataha* was another instrument of the drum kind also used as an accompaniment to vocal music (*Ib.* X, 39). It is explained as a side-drum covered with skin and played like the *ghata*, either with a stick or hand (Sangeetha-rathnakara, Vol. II. P. 567). *Panava* and *Dindima* were probably other varieties of the same kind (*Ib.* X, 43, 44). *Madduka* was a kind of brass trumpet played as an accompaniment (*Ib.* 38). *Adambara* was a kind of shrill clarionet (*Ib.* 45). But the more interesting of the musical instruments were those of the stringed kind. *Veena* was a general name for all kinds of stringed instruments. The Veena which Kusa and Lava played to the accompaniment of their voices could have been

either of the *Pinaki* or the *Nissanka Veena* kind, which was played with a bow and which would have been better fitted as an accompaniment by giving out a greater volume of sound. Bharatha on his return to Ayodha was surprised to find that no sounds of *Bheri*, *Mridanga*, and *Veena* played with sticks, were heard, as used to be the case before (Ayodhya-kanda, Sar. 71, Sl. 29½; Yuddha-kanda, Sar. 24, Sl. 43½). The commentator Govindaraja wrongly interprets this passage as meaning that *Bheri* and *Mridanga* only were played with sticks, while *Veena* was played with the hand. He was probably not aware that there were two kinds of *Veena*, the *Chithra* and *Vipanchi* which were optionally played with sticks or plectrums, as we would now call them, or with the hand. *Chithra* had seven strings, and *Vipanchi* nine, not seven as the above commentator thinks. The *Sangeetha-rathnakara* (Vol. II, pp. 420) says that “*Chithra* and *Vipanchi* are played both with sticks and with the hand; but some think that *Chithra* should be played with the fingers, and *Vipanchi* with sticks; while others think that *Chithra* should be played with the fingers, and *Vipanchi* with both.” The *Vipanchi* variety of *Veena* seems to have been in more common use than others (Sundara-kanda, X 37—41). A wind instrument of the flute kind was played by some of the mistresses of Ravana (Sundara-kanda, X 40); while instruments of various other kinds also seem to have been commonly used (ib. 49). Bands of *Bheri*, *Mridanga*, *Panava*, *Sankha* and *Venu*, which were attached to the armies, were played on the battle-field, infusing enthusiasm in the hearts of disheartened soldiers (Yuddha-kanda, Sar. 44, Sl. 42½). Such is a brief sketch of the state of the musical development in the days of the Ramayana, which is really astonishing, when we consider that the incidents delineated in the story are supposed to have taken place

nearly five thousand years ago—a period supposed to be of Cimmerian darkness in the history of the world, compared with the modern times.

The Ramayana may be considered to be the earliest national ballad of the country. We see in it the customs, feelings, and superstitions of the age truly portrayed by a master hand. In those days when there were no newspapers to convey news, and no printed books available for easy information, it was such ballads that were instruments of knowledge and education to the people of the country. Thus preserved from oblivion, it has passed from generation to generation with little alteration, till it is in the mouth of everyone who feels as if the events recorded therein were but of yesterday's occurrence. There is no doubt that the one source of its great popularity is that it is the work of a man who was not divorced by wealth or rank or education from the mass of his fellows, but whose education came straight from nature, from which he derived his homely pathos and humour and simplicity and charm. It is this that invests it with a halo of sanctity which is denied to other works of a similar kind. Its perennial interest is in its smooth flow of diction and simple rhythm which every body is able to appreciate."—From the *Hindu*, a daily published in the Madras Presidency, India.

P. 28. 1. "None but the disciple of the Great Ones can ever hope to know Brahman and realize It. The highest wisdom is that which is imparted to the disciple by his Teacher."—So says the Sruthi ; and Valmeeki illustrates the great truth by opening his great epic with the teaching given to him by Narada, the divine sage. Chapter 2 recounts how his master blessed him with the necessary capacities to compose the life-record of Sree Rama. In chapter 3, he tells us that before his opened eye unrolled scene after scene of that wonderful world-drama, to the

minutest detail. The beauty of the work, its greatness and profundity are suggested to us in chapter 4.

Our elders always make it a point never to undertake any thing without calling down on themselves and their work the blessings of the Giver of good. A benediction, or thanksgiving, or an indication of the subject is the mode generally adopted. Valmeeki, intent upon removing obstacles of every kind from his path and upon giving his poem an eternity of fame, follows in the foot-steps of these that went before him, and makes an auspicious beginning by a brief indication of the subject.

2. *Manu* :—A Day of Brahma is divided into 14 Manvantaras and 15 twilights = 1000 Maha-yugas. Swetha-varahakalpa, the present Day, witnesses the reign of 14 Manus—Swayambhuva, Swarochisha, Uththama, Thamasa, Rai-vatha, Chakshusha, Vaivasvatha, Savarni, Daksha-savarni, Brahmasavarni, Dharma-savarni, Rudra-savarni, Rauchya and Bhauthya. Sraddha-deva, the son of Vivaswan (the sun) and Samgna, the daughter of Visvakarman, is the Manu of the seventh or the Vaivaswatha manvantara. Yama, the God of Death is his brother, and Yamuna, the river-goddess, is his sister. (V. P. III. 2).

When the last day of Brahma was at its close, He withdrew into himself in Yogic meditation ; the Vedas chanced to slip out from his mouth and Hayagreeva, the Asura, made away with them. The Lord Vishnu immediately changed himself into a tiny fish and appeared in the water in the joined palms of Sathya-vratha, the king, who was offering libations of water to the Gods and to the manes. He was about to throw it into the river, when, the little creature begged hard to be saved. Sathyavratha took it home and kept it in a vessel of water. But, it grew on marvellously and the king tried wells, tanks, lakes and rivers in vain and was about to throw it into the ocean, when, it cried out to him. "Hold!

you will have need of me. Seven days from this, a mighty deluge will hide the face of the earth. Then you will see a large ship coming towards you. Go into it and take with you the seven Rishis, animals, plants of healing virtue and seeds of various kinds. When it is tossed violently by stormy waves, fasten it to me with a serpent. I will guide you safely through the waste of waters till Brahma should wake to a new Day. Further, I shall impart to you the highest wisdom ever known to man." "Verily, this is no fish that grows so vast in such a wonderfully short space. Who knows that the Lord might have chosen to manifest himself thus?" said Sathya-vratha to himself in hushed awe; and while the words were yet on his lips, the strange fish vanished from his sight. Sathya-vratha, the pious king, is no other than Sraddha-deva or Vaivasvatha-manu. (Bh. VIII. 24).

In each manvantara there is an incarnation of Vishnu and there are certain governing officials—the Manu, the Manu's sons, the Saptha Rishis, the Indra, and the Devathas. At the end of a cycle of four Yugas, the Vedas, the repository of all wisdom, disappear from the earth. The Saptha Rishis recover it by intense meditation and give it back to the new race. The Manus are the founders of royal dynasties and see that the various grades of men observe their Dharma. The Manu-puthras or the sons of the Manu, incarnate again and again in his descendants and are the guardians of law and order to the end of that Manvantara. The Devathas (Shining ones) are fed by the subtle essences that are offered to them during sacrifices and bless humanity in turn with peace and plenty. The Indra holds sway over the three worlds and the beings that evolve therein. The Lord incarnates as the mighty Sons of Wisdom (the Kumaras, Datta-thr-eya and the like) and impart to the world the Laws of Action and Contemplation.

The Saptha Rishis.—Vasishtha, Kasyapa, Athri, Jamadagni, Gauthama, Visvamithra and Bharadwaja. (V. P. III. 2). The Vayu Purana gives it as Vasuman, the son of Vasishtha, Visvamithra, the son of Gadhi, Jamadagni the son of Bharadwaja, the son of Brihaspathi, Saradwan, the son of Gothama, and Athri, the mind-born son of Brahma.

Indra :—Purandara (V. P. III. 2)

Devathas:—Vasus, Rudras and Adithyas (V.P. III. 2).

Vasus, Rudras, Adithyas, Visvedevas, Maruths, Aswini-kumaras and Ribhus. (Bh. VIII. 13). The Vayu Purana adds to the above the Sadhyas and the descendants of Bhrigu and Angiras. The Harivamsa declares that 49 Maruths are born in every Manvantara ; that 28 of them attain liberation therein and that others are born to take their place.

Manu :—Sraddha-deva, the son of Vivaswan.

Manuputhras—Ikshwaku, Nriga, Dhrishta, Saryathi, Narishyantha, Nabhaga, Arishta, Karusha, and Prishadra (V. P. III. 2). Bh. IX. 2 adds Dishta to the list and replaces Arishta by Kavi.

Avathara.—Vamana, born of Kasyapa and Adithi (V. P. III. 2).

3. *Ikshwaku* :—V. R. I. 70 (Notes).

5. *Islands* :—Priyavratha, the son of Manu Swayambhuva, followed the sun in his course round the mount Meru seven times. Seven broad oceans came into existence thereby, filled with salt water, sugar-cane juice, wine, clarified butter, curds, milk and fresh water respectively and the lands girt by them form the seven islands, each twice the extent of the former.—Jambu, Plaksha, Salmali, Kusa, Krauncha, Saka, and Pushkara.

These but symbolise the seven globes of our Earth-chain (Bhoo-mandala) and interpenetrate one another, being built of matter of increasing subtlety. The oceans that separate

them are aggregates of homogeneous matter utilised in the formation of the globe it encircles, but in an undifferentiated (*Apancheekritha*) state. The names given to them typify the appearance they present to the eye of the trained seer. But again, the same division of islands and oceans apply to the Jamboo-dweepa too, wherein huge continents rise one after another to receive their humanities and go down when their work is accomplished. (For a fuller description refer to the Bhagavatha and the other Puranas, as also to the Mahabharatha, Bheeshma-parva).

6. *Sagara*—V. R. I. 70. (Notes).

Q.—Why should Sagara be singled out of the many illustrious names in the Solar dynasty?

A.—It was his sons that dug up the whole of this Earth ; it was they who brought the broad seas into existence. It was a descendent of Sagara that brought down the celestial Ganga to the earth.

11. *Four aims of Life* :—The text specifies but three of them ; but Moksha or Liberation, follows from the words of Valmeeki. “ He who listens to this with a devout heart is free from the bonds of sin.”

13. *Envy*.—Valmeeki was but the humble scribe of what Brahma gave him power to see. So, none need envy him, but should listen with supreme devotion to the words of the Lord himself.

The *subject* has been indicated by the expression “the mighty Kings of the line of Ikshwaku ;” the *purpose* has been proclaimed by the words “secures the four aims of life ;” the qualified *aspirant* is said to be he whose heart is free from Envy’s taint.

Give ear unto it.—Valmeeki composed this epic to be sung to the accompaniment of sweet music. Kusa and Lava sang it before Sree Rama ; and even now it is sweeter to hear than to read.

14. *Kosala*—It might have extended from the river Gogra to the Ganga. For, we read of a town on the Ganga situated between the Kosala country and the lands of the Bhils.

Dasaratha ruled over the Utthara (North) Kosala—(Raghuvamsa IX 1).

15. *Sarayu*, the modern Gogra, rises in the Himalayas, flows through the province of Oudh and falls into the Ganga. Sarayu is generally identified with the Deva or the Gogra ; but, the people living thereabouts regard them as different. They rise in different places, run together for many miles and fall into the Ganga separately.

17. *Ayodhya*—Mentioned in the Sruthis as “ Ayodhya, the city of the Gods.” Its ruins on the southern banks of the Gogra cover many miles of impassable forest and dense undergrowth. It is about 350 miles to the south-east of Delhi, in the neighbourhood of the modern Faizabad.

Abul Fazl speaks of it as “ one of the largest cities in Hindustan. In the old times it is said to have been 296 miles in length and 72 in breadth. The soil around seems to be auriferous.”

“ It is on the Oudh and Rohilkhand Railway, 126 miles from Moghul-sarai Junction, 130 miles from Khanpur Junction and 405 miles from Saharanpur Junction.

Rajah Vikramadithya (57 B.C.) is said to have traced out the ancient city and identified the different shrines and spots rendered sacred by association with the events in the life of Rama. The most important of these are Ramkot, or the Fort and palace of the king, the Nageswaranath shrine, sacred to Mahadeva, the Manipurvatha or sacred mount and a few temples still visited by thousands of pilgrims.

Kosala is also famous as the early home of Buddhism ; the Chinese traveller Hiuen Thsang, in the seventh

century, found 20 Buddhist temples with 3,000 monks at Ayodhya among a large Brahminical population.

The Muhamadan conquest has left behind it the ruins of three mosques erected by the Emperors Baber and Aurangazeb on or near the site of three celebrated Hindu shrines known as Janma-sthana, Swarga-dwara, and Jareta-ka-thakur. The population of the modern town is about 11,643. The principal buildings are Man Singh's temple and the Hanuman Garhi. The great fair of Rama Navami held every year in the month of Chithra (March-April) is attended by about 500,000 people.

The town is 3 miles from the Railway station, 545 miles from Calcutta by the East Indian and Oudh and Rohilkhand Railways, and 46 miles from Lucknow."—*The Traveller's Companion.*

26. *Twelve leagues* :—This was the extent of the city proper,

28. *Guns*—The word Sathaghni in the text means, a weapon that could destroy innumerable men at the same time. Some hold that it was the ancestor of the modern guns ; and others that it was a huge piece of rock or iron studded with long iron nails, 30. 4.

P. 30. 4. *Chess-board*—The palace in the centre, the royal roads branching from it north and south, east and west, and open grounds here and there between them.

20. *Bards* :—The *Soothas* are the offspring of the Brahmanas and the Kshathriyas. They were chariot-teers by profession and sang the praises of their royal patrons. The *Magadhas* were born of Vaisya fathers and Kshathriya mothers (corresponding to the Bhats of Guzerat). They recited before kings the genealogies of their ancestors and composed poems in honour of the famous rulers of the line and of their mighty achievements. They accompanied the army on the march and sang to them in stirring strains

the deeds of valour of the doughty warriors of their race. The troops felt not the fatigue and hardships of the march, and were filled with unbounded courage and enthusiasm. The *Vandis* claim birth from Kshathriya fathers and Soodra mothers. They are the proclaimers of the titles and honours of kings ; they praise them high and his exploits. They cheer up the hearts of the soldiers before battle by their fiery songs. The *Vaithalikas* rouse the king from his slumbers by their sweet music and sweeter praise.

23. *Art of dance* :—Rishi Bharatha is the highest authority on the Gandharva-veda, and has composed Soothras on vocal and instrumental music, dance, rhetoric and the drama. They are lost to us except for some references by the old commentators on the Sanskrit plays. Now-a-days Bharatha-sasthra limits itself to the art of dance and gesticulation. The Sangeetha-rathnakara of Sarangadeva devotes a large chapter to it.

35. *Car-warrior* :—Able to hold his own against 10,000 foes, and to defend himself and his charioteer. He is the Maharatha.

P. 31. 3. *Never strike*:—Argument must be met by argument, and invectives by invectives. Those should not be attacked who stand aloof from the ranks or take to their heels ; warriors mounted upon chariots, elephants and horses should fight only with those similarly mounted ; a foot soldier might attack another on foot. Every one should seek a foe suited to his strength, spirit, equipment and liking ; but he should give him due warning. Men dazed with terror, soldiers who are not ready to fight, persons who are fighting with another, those that throw themselves on our mercy, those that run away, those that stand weaponless or have lost their armour, charioteers, horses, camp-followers that carry weapons to the fighters,

drummers, trumpeters and such like should be exempt from attack. (M. B. Bheeshma-parva. Ch. I).

6. *Dasaratha*:—V. R. I. 70 (Notes).

[1. Valmeeki draws our attention to the fact that the land and the city was supremely suited to form the home of the Avathara.

2. Explanatory notes on the kingdom, the capital, the king, the ministers, the priests, the royal officials, the army and kingly polity are appended to Ch. 100 of the Ayodhyakanda.]

32. 10. *Athiratha*:—One able to hold his own against 10,000 Maharatnas.

17. *Kubera*:—The Uttharakanda of the Ramayana (3, 4 the following chapters) describe his birth and achievements.

33. 11. *Atheist*:—V. R. II, 108, 109.

34. 23. *Bahlika*:—A country to the north and north-west of India. The modern Balkh was a portion of it. It was famous for its horses (M. B. Udyoga-parva); and Bokhara and Maimona near it are even now noted for their fine breed of horses.

Kambhoja:—To the north-west of India, was famous for its excellent breed of horses. The Ramayana speaks of it as a country adorned with golden lotuses. It was peopled by Kshathriyas, who were later on degraded as having fallen off from their Dharma. (Manu X, 43, 44). Arjuna subdued the Daradas and the Kambhojas (M. B. Sabha parva. 27). The modern Daradas inhabit the valley of Gilgit; so, the Kambhojas should be found in the neighbouring heights of Hindu Kush. Besides, the Kaffirs thereabouts call themselves Kamojas. We may also hold that the Kambhojas and the Daradas are spread over Little Tibet and Ladak. Their country was famous for its beautiful horses, and costly shawls made of wool and dogs' hair. Even now, the shawls of Kashmir are made of wool imported

into it from the north ; so, Kambhoja ought to be somewhere north of Kashmir.—*Anandaram Booroool's Aryan Geography.*

24. *Vanayu*:—north-west of India, famous for its horses.

Sindh:—The modern Punjab and Sindh that lie on either side of the Indus.

25. *Ucchaisravas*:—(V. R. I. 45).

29. *Airavatha*:—Great elephants, eight in number, support the earth on their broad heads in the eight quarters, beginning from the east—Airavatha, Pundareeka (Maha Padma), Vamana, Kumuda, Arjana, Pushpadantha, Sarvabhouma, and Supratheeeka. Their wives are Abhramu, Kapila, Pingala, Anupama, Thamraparni, Subhradanthi, Angana, Anjanavathi, Bhadhra, etc.—V. R. II. 100.

[Thus has been described the fortunate being who was deemed fit to be the human father of the Lord of Time.]

36. *Sumanthra*:—He was the charioteer and confidential adviser of the Ikshwaku kings. He appears to have lived from a very remote period, during the previous Yugas. He was the most trusted counsellor in the court of Rama.

One day, a servant of the palace approached Rama on his throne and said to him over folded palms, “Lord ! Sumanthra, the long-lived and faithful servant of your royal house, has left this earth even to-day for the Mansions of the Blessed. His wives request permission of your Majesty to follow him.”

Rama was overwhelmed with grief and hastened to the palace of Sumanthra. He carefully examined the life-record of his friend and found that 9,999 years 11 months and 21 days of it had passed away ; but 9 days yet remained. He turned to the sage Vasishtha, and said “Reverend Sir ! I believe it has been ordained that the normal period of human life is 100,000 years in the Kritha Yuga, 10,000

years in the Thretha Yuga, 1,000 years in the Dwapara Yuga and 100 years in the Kali Yuga. Nine days yet remain to Sumanthra of his life and I wonder how Yama, who cannot be but aware of it, had the temerity to take him away before his time. Surely, it is no credit to my rule. It is violating the Laws of the Yugas. It is an insult to him that rules. I will teach him his duty, in a way he will not be in a hurry to forget ; and Sumanthra shall be restored to his sorrowing people.” He set out on his conveyance, Garuda, the wonderful bird. On his way to Samyamini, the capital of Yama, he saw the messengers of Death dragging along Sumanthra in bonds. In a moment he was in their midst ; they fled in affright from his dark anger ; he released Sumanthra from his bonds, though he was but a shade in his subtle bodies. The servitors of the Lord of Death joined folded palms of respect and exclaimed. “Lord of worlds ! We do not remember of any injury or affront or insult from us against your royal self. We find it hard to explain to ourselves this unmerited punishment at your hands.” “ You forget” replied Rama “ that you have defied the great Law and laid hands on my friend by taking him back nine days before his time. Is it a light thing to be passed over ?”. “ Your majesty “ replied they ” might not have been aware of the very peculiar circumstances that attended Sumanthra’s birth. His head and shoulders came out first from his mother’s womb and the other members only ten days after. Holy Brahmanas protected him from great peril by chanting excellent mantras ; hence, his name Sumanthra. We have calculated a-right from the moment his head appeared ; but, your majesty has taken his complete birth as the starting point of his life. Thus there is a great cloud of doubt hangs over the precise moment of his birth. We beg to repeat that we are guilty of no offence against your majesty ; it is to no purpose that

we have been thus punished ; it is to no purpose that Sumanthra is taken back."

" You are out in your calculations " rejoined Rama " for, Sumanthra's life period begins from the moment he came out of his mother's womb safe and sound. He might have died during the ten days and yet, he could not be said to have been born. His father and the learned Brahmanas with him have performed the rights of Jathakarma on the very day I have referred to ; and expert astrologers have cast his horoscope on the same lines. Nine days yet remain to Sumanthra of his natural period of life. Come ye then and take him away."

The discomfited messengers of Yama hung heir heads in sorrow and despair. Sree Rama returned to Ayodhya and restored Sumanthra to his sorrowing kin. He advised his friend to turn to the very best account the nine days left to him on earth ; and Sumanthra spent them wisely and well.

Meanwhile, Yama's henchmen hastened to the presence of their master with streaming eyes and angry hearts. They dashed their helmets on the ground in impotent fury and cried " Lord ! A nice power you wield! We do not envy you the life you lead. Nay, we are ashamed to call ourselves your servants. Now, it was under your orders that we went forth to bring back Sumanthra and lo! Sree Rama overtook us on the way, rescued his friend from our hand; and cruelly punished us for having dared to affront his majesty by calling back Sumanthra nine days before time. For, he claims that Sumanthra's life begins only from the time when he was completely delivered from his mother's womb. We have not your marvellous patience and cannot afford to swallow down this insult. You are the guardian of our life and honour ; and since you cannot save us from harm, we will make away with ourselves by violence." Yama's dark brow grew darker yet with fury ;

fire flashed forth from his eyes and he cried out "This moment I march out to make war upon Rama and bring him back in chains." In vain did he appeal for help to his brother regents of the quarters, to the rulers of the sacred planets, to Dhruva, to Brahma, and to the dwellers of the nether regions and the seven globes; but one and all, they drove him out with ridicule. But, he was not to be put back and marched upon Ayodhya single as he was. Rama sent his son Lava to take care of him. A terrible fight ensued between the two, at the end of which Yama, as a last resource, discharged his Rod of Death ; Lava drove it back by his Brahmasthra. Yama was hotly pursued by the Asthra, when Soorya, the sun-god, came down to Lava and interceded with him to spare his son's life. "Lava dear ! You come of my race ; Yama here is my son. You cannot have the heart to injure and disgrace this noble ancestor of yours. Oblige me by recalling your dread weapon. You don't want me to believe that Yama has infected you with his madness." Lava bowed in obedience and all repaired to the presence of Sree Rama, who welcomed them with kindness and gave a friendly hint to Yama to respect his rule and take back to the realms of death only such as have had their full count of days on this earth.

On the tenth day from that, Sumanthra and his wives touched the feet of Sree Rama, cast off their mortal bodies before him and rose bright and glorious to his abode on high. *A. R. Rajya-kanda 24.*

Vasishtha :—One of the mind-born sons of Brahma ; he is a Brahmarshi and one of the Saptharshis. He came out from the Prana of Brahma.—*Bh. III. 12.*

Oorja or Arundhathi, the daughter of Kardama, the Prajapathi and Devahoothi, is his wife. Chithrakethu, Surochi, Viraja, Mithra, Ulvana, Dyuman, Sakthi, Vasubhridyana and others were his sons.—*Bh. IV. I.* But *V.P. I.*

10, names Rajas, Gathra, Oordhwa-bahu, Savana, Anagha, Suthapas, and Sukra as his sons. Sakthi and others were his sons by another wife (*Bh*). The Vayu and the Linga-puranas substitute Puthra and Hastha for Gathra, and add a daughter Pundareeka. The eldest son of Vasishtha married the daughter of Markandeya and gave birth to Kethuman, the regent of the west. (*Vayu P.*)

Vasishtha was the Veda-vyasa in the 8th Maha-yuga ; and his sons were the Saptharshis in the 3rd Manvantara. V. R. VII. 55, 56, 57 and V. P. IV. 5, narrate in detail his being cursed by King Nimi and his re-birth as the son of Mithra and Varuna.

He is the Seer of Rig-veda VIIth Mandala and hymns 67, 90, 97 of the IXth

V. R. I. 51 to 66 deal at great length with his contest with Visvamithra.

He is the author of the Vasishtha-smrithi and the Vasishtha-ramayana.

Q.—Vasishtha, one of the Prajapathis and one of the Saptharshis, cannot have existed simultaneously in the world of Brahma, in the Saptarishi-mandala (the Great Bear), Indra's council, and in various places on earth.

A.—They have attained the high level where it is possible for them to manifest themselves in consciousness in innumerable places at the same time—qualified omnipresence which great Beings like Vasishtha, Kasyapa, Markandeya and Vamadeva enjoy as standing nearest to divinity.

Vamadeva:—A Maharshi, the Seer of Rig-Veda, X. 1 to 15, 18 to 41, and 45 to 58 Sookthas. He is spoken of as very high in the scale of perfection and to have identified his consciousness with every evolved object.

Jabali:—V. R. II. 108. 109.

38. 1. [Chapters 8 to 16 describe the horse-sacrifice which is really a symbolical rite of consecration and

purification to enable the human couple to provide a fit vehicle for the Lord to occupy when on earth.]

4. *Without any offspring*:—King Kosala was the happy ruler of South Kosala. He had a daughter, Kausalya by name, whom he had arranged to marry to Dasaratha, lord of Ayodhya. The day was fixed and the king's ministers were sent to escort the royal bride-groom. They found him disporting himself with his ministers and kinsmen in the cool waters of Sarayu.

About the same time, Ravana, the Rakshasa king, took it into his head to know the future that awaited him, and asked Brahma, "Lord of Omniscience ! From whom shall I meet with my death ?" And Brahma replied unto him "Child ! Be it known to you that the Lord Vishnu will come down into the world as the sons of Dasaratha, the king of Ayodhya and Kausalya his wife. He shall be your Fate. Five days from this they are to be joined in happy marriage."

Ravana resolved to forestall the dread decrees of Destiny ; he lost no time in seeking out Dasaratha, put to rout his affrighted ministers and followers and with a kick of his foot shattered the frail boat in which he was. Next, he went to the city of Kosala and abducted by open violence Kausalya, the destined bride of Dasaratha and took her to his island capital. On the way he chanced to see a huge whale and said to himself "The Gods are my relentless enemies. I am away from Lanka very often and they may take advantage of my absence to enter the city in disguise and set free the captive. It is safer to entrust her to this dread monster of the sea." He placed her in a chest and enjoined the whale to take her in charge until he should call for her.

The fish secreted it within his capacious jaws and roamed the depths of the ocean, when, as Fate would have

it, he met with one of his kin who challenged him to mortal combat. He could not decline it in honour and as the chances of war were uncertain, he deposited the precious chest on an island near and began to fight.

Meanwhile, Dasaratha and his minister Sumanthra clung to a piece of the wreck and were driven helplessly along the swift current of Sarayu into the shoreless sea and after being tossed about for some days by the waves, chanced to be stranded on the very same island. Wandering about, they caught sight of the chest and satisfied their curiosity by opening it ; when lo ! they were struck dumb with surprise and amazement to behold Kausalya in it. They exchanged news and as it was the day fixed for their marriage, they went through the Gandharva rite with Sumanthra as the witness. Then they entered the box and let the lid down upon them. Soon after, the whale, having defeated his enemy, came back to the isle, replaced the box in his mouth and went on its way.

That day, Ravana in full council turned to Brahma with a smile and said " Lord ! Have I not falsified your prediction ? Dasaratha is no more; and Kausalya his bride is a safe prisoner. What say you to it ?" He clapped his hands in high glee at having discomfited Brhma, the Omniscient. But, the Lord of Wisdom raised his hands on high and exclaimed in solemn tones "Om ! This is verily a great day." Ravana was startled by Brahma's composure and unfeigned joy. "Lord !" cried he " what do you mean ?" Then, said Brahma " Nay, my son ! I but spoke the truth. This day have Dasaratha and Kausalya entered into bonds of holy wedlock. The Lord of worlds will take birth of them ; and all beings will be the happier for it." But Ravana, determined to prove by incontestible evidence that the Grand-Sire was, for once, at fault, sent swift messengers to bring back the chest from the whale. It was opened before the as-

sembled multitude and wonder of wonders ! Kausalya did come out of it, but with Dasaratha and Sumanthra, happy and similing. Ravana stared at them in dumb surprise ; soon a fit of uncontrollable wrath seized him, and his terrible falchion flashed forth to cut them down. But Brahma caught his hand and cried, " Fool ! Know you what you are about ? You placed Kausalya in this chest ; and now he whom you fondly imagined to have destroyed is with her, her husband ; and Sumanthra, the wise, has witnessed the holy rite. They will change themselves to thousands, to millions, if necessary. It is written down in the Book of Fate that the Lord is to come down on earth as the son of the happy pair. He is your destiny in human shape. Fool ! to dream that *you* will kill them and falsify the eternal decrees of Fate ! Leave the future to itself ; 'let sleeping dogs lie' ; do not go out to meet Death ere it comes for you. Have these conveyed safely to Ayodhya ; and abide your time in Lanka. You to set yourself to falsify my word ! Verily, inexorable are the Laws of Karma and as mysterious." Ravana, the terrible, was cowed down by the ominous words of Brahma and faithfully followed his behests.

Dasaratha and Kausalya were enthusiastically welcomed by their kinsmen, friends and subjects, who looked upon them as risen from the dead. The royal pair were wedded in stately pomp and King Kosala, in the height of his joy, made over his kingdom to Dasaratha and sought the holy retreats of the calm forests. Thereafter, the Kosalas are spoken of as belonging to the solar race. Later on, the king of Ayodhya married Sumithra, a Magadha princess and Kaikeyee, the daughter of Aswapathi, ruler over Kekaya. He had besides these, 700 consorts (350—V. R. II. 34)—*A. R. I. 1.*

Kausalya and Kaikeyee were Kshathriya princesses ; while Sumithra came of a mixed caste—*Bhatti-kavya*, 6.

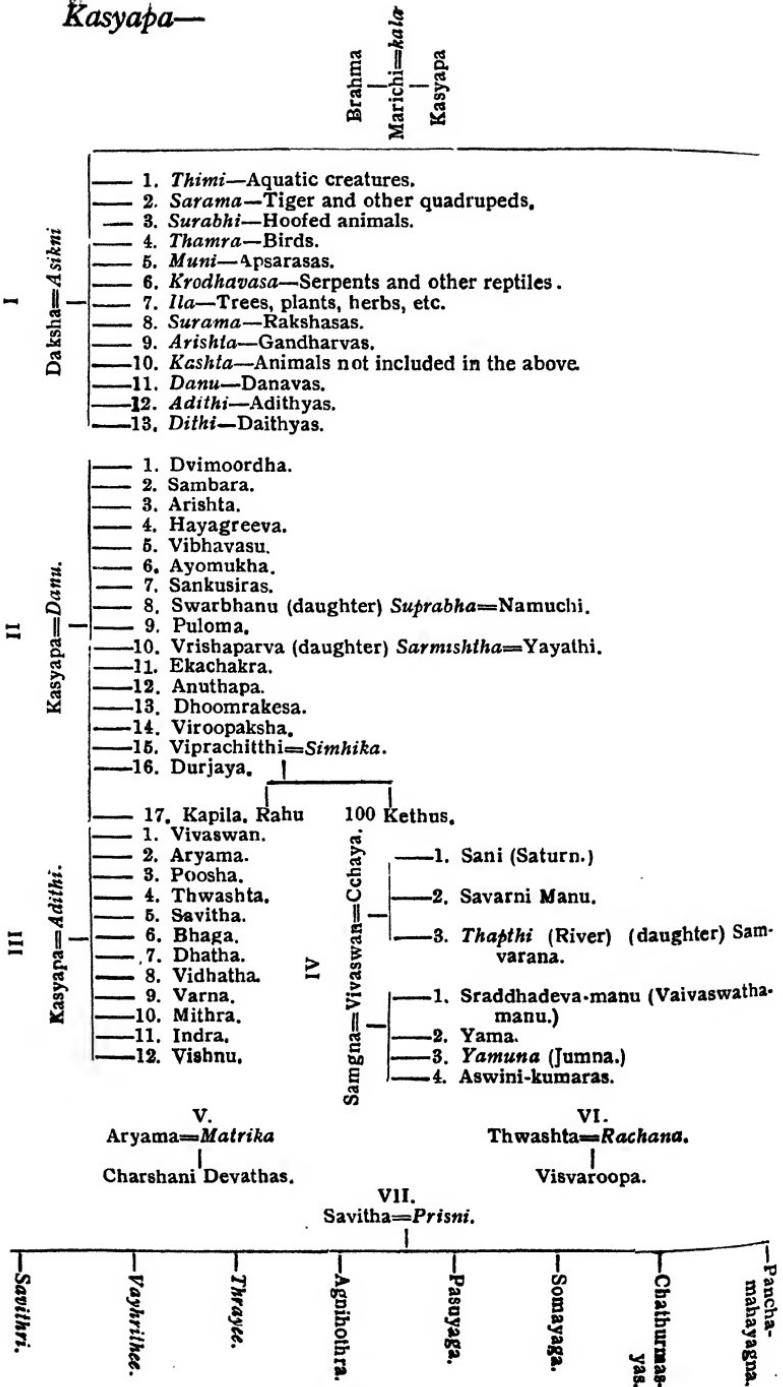
Unknown obstacle :—One day he unwittingly slew a Vaisya youth, mistaking him for an elephant. *V. R. II. 63.* 64.) Vasishtha directed him to perform a horse-sacrifice to cleanse himself of the foul sin—*A. R. I. 1.*

One day he dreamt that he put to death two men and a woman, innocent victims of his wrath. He awoke shudderingly, and sought the advice of Vasishtha, his friend, philosopher and guide. “It is an evil dream” replied the sage “go and kill three wild animals. I will perform for you an expiatory ceremony thereafter.” It was on that occasion that he did to death the Vaisya youth. Dasaratha’s heart was too heavy with the load of ever-increasing murder. “Fear not” consoled Vasishtha “perform a horse-sacrifice and free yourself from all sin. Four sons of matchless fame shall call you father ; but manage to bring down Rishyasringa, the pure, to your court ; for, he has to play no inconsiderable part in it.”

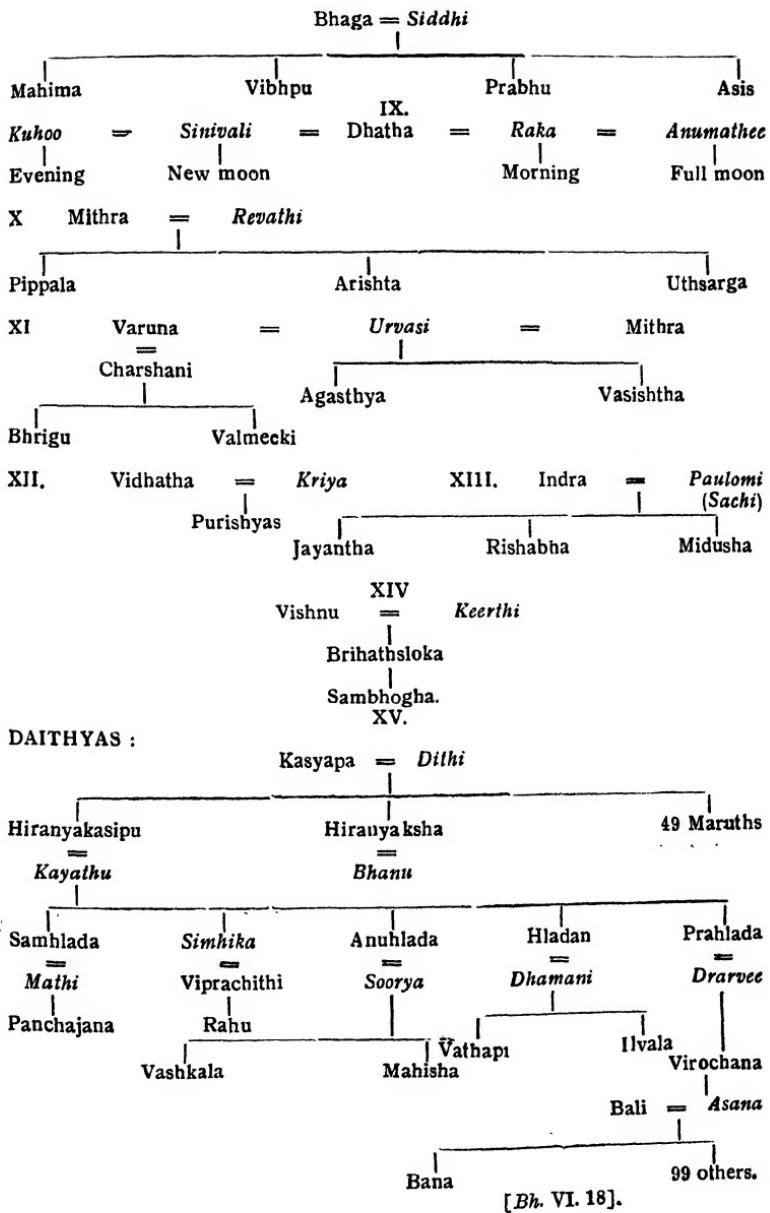
It was about that time that Indra took Dasaratha to help him defeat the Asuras. He could not honour him enough ; and Brihaspathi, the high-priest of the gods, bestowed his choicest blessings upon him. “The Lord of the universe will grace your line as your son”. “Then,” said Dasaratha “holy one! It comes back to me that Maharshi Vasishtha asked me to any how bring down to Ayodhya, Rishyasringa, the sinless, to perform a Puthreshti”. Indra, ever seeking a chance to serve his benefactor, laid his commands on the Apsarasas to lure the holy saint from his lonely forest home, which they did.—*Legendary.*

Suyagna—Son of Vasishtha, was the Purohitha of Rama, who made over to him much of his wealth when he departed to the forests.

Kasyapa—



viii.



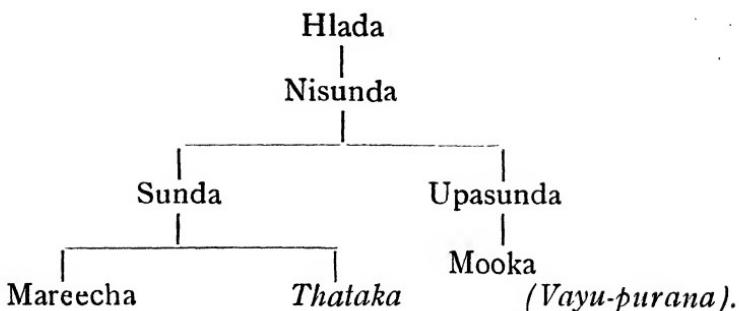
Adithi, Dithi, Danu, Arishta, Surasa, Kasha, Surabhi, Vinatha, Thamra, Krodhavasa, Ila, Kadru and Muni are the wives of Kasyapa. The Thushithas, twelve in number, belong to the Chakshusha Manvanthara. "Let us be born" said they "in the next manvanthara as the sons of Adithi and become famous". They are the twelve Adithyas. (V. P. I. 15.).

The Vayu Purana substitutes Prabha and Anayus for Arishta and Surasa. *Padma Purana* II, omit Ila and Kasha and reads Kala, Anayus, Simhika, Pisacha, Vak, Surasa (instead of Arishta, Surabhi, Thamra and Muni). But, the Utharakanda of the same Purana limits them to Adithi, Dithi, Kadru and Vinatha.

V. P. III. 1. assigns the Thushithas to the Swarochisha Manvanthara ; while the Vayu-purana relates that Brahma evolved twelve classes of Devathas named Jayas, to assist him in his work. It was at the beginning of this Kalpa ; but, as they remained absorbed in pure Samadhi and obeyed not his orders to create, he cursed them to be born in each of the seven manvantaras. They are variously known as Ajithas, Thushithas, Sathyas, Haris, Vaikunthas, Sadhyas, and Adithyas.

Arishtanemi is said to have married the four daughters of Daksha (*Bh.* and *V. P.*). But M. B. explains that it was but another name for Kasyapa. *Bh.* substitutes Tharksha for Arishtanemi ; his wives are Kadru, Vinatha, Pathangi, Yamini ; and serpents, birds, grass-hoppers, and locusts were born of them respectively. But, the commentator explains that Tharksha is another name for Kasyapa.

Ayushman, Sibi and Bashkala are the sons of Samhlada. *V. P. I. 21* ; while, the Padmapurana assigns them to Prahlada.



Jarjara, Sakuni, Bootha-santhapana, Mahanabha, Maha-bahu, Kalanabha (and Tharaka, according to another reading) are the sons of Hiranyaksha. V. P. I. 21 adds Sankara and Tharaka to the list. The Vayu-purana relates that the sons of Simhika were killed by Parasurama, all except Rahu and Kethu. Of the sons of Danu, Sachi, the daughter of Puloman, married Indra and was the mother of Jayantha. Maya, the brother of Puloma, had two daughters, Vajrakama and Mandodari.

Suki, Syeni, Bhasi, Sugreeva, Suchi and Gridhri were the daughters of Kasyapa and Thamra. Suki was the mother of owls and crows ; Syeni of vultures ; Bhasi of partridges ; Gridhri of eagles ; Suchi of aquatic birds ; Sugreeva of horses, asses and camels. (But the Vayu-purana has it that parrots were born of Garuda and Suki ; Sampathi and Jatayu were the sons of Aruna and Syeni ; Bhasi and Garuda gave birth to owls, crows, peacocks, does and fowls ; Garuda and Krounchi begot cranes ; and, ducks and other aquatic birds sprang of Garuda and Dhritharashree). Aruna and Garuda were born to Kasyapa and Vinatha ; of them, Garuda or Suparna was the monarch of the feathered tribe and the foe of serpents. (The Vayu-purana gives the metres of the Vedas as Vinatha's daughters. The Padma makes Soudamini the daughter of the same). Surasa gave birth to many serpents ; they were hydra-headed and of immeasurable-might and could course through all the worlds. (The Vayu

and the Padma substitute Anayus for Surasa; but the Mathsyas give Surasa and Anayus as the wives of Kasyapa ; the former was the mother of the quadrupeds except the cows, and the latter was the mother of diseases). Kadru's offspring were countless Nagas, many-headed, resplendent and mighty. Sesha, Vasuki, Thakshaka, Sankha, Swetha, Mahapadma, Kambala, Aswathara, Elaputhra, Karkotaka and Dhananjaya are the most famous. (The Vayu adds to the list Airavatha, Dhritharashtra, Mahaneela, Valahaka, Anjana, Pushpadamshtra, Durmukha, Kaleeya, Pundareeka, Nahusha and Mani). Krodhavasa gave birth to 14,000 Rakshasas, serpents and birds of every kind. They are carnivorous and of sharp teeth. Cows and oxen were born to Surabhi ; Kasha was the mother of Rakshasas and Yakshas. This creation of Kasyapa took place during the second Manvantara. (V.P. I. 21) [The Vayu-purana assigns Mrigi and eleven others as the daughters of Krodhavasa, from whom were born wild animals, deer, elephants, monkeys, tigers, lions, dogs, fish, reptiles, Bhoothas and Pisachas. Surabhi was the mother of the eleven Rudras, Nandi the bull of Siva and two daughters, Rohini and Gandhari, who in turn gave birth to horned animals and horses. The Apsarasas are of two classes, Loukika or worldly—Rambha, Thilotthama, Misrakesi and 31 others ; divine—Menaka, Sahajanya, Ghrithachi, Pramlocha, Visvachi and Poorvachithi and four others. Urvasi created by Rishi Narayana, belongs to neither. Further, there are 14 groups of them, of which Ahoothas, Sobhayantis and Vegamathis are the chief. The Padma makes Vak the mother of the Apsarasas and the Gandharvas.

Kasyapa is the Regent of one of the four stars in the tail of the Simsumara-chakra (a symbol of the manifested universe). V.P. II, 12.

He is often classed among the Prajapathis and has, besides those mentioned above, two sons Parvatha and Vibhandaka.

It was during that present Vaivasvatha-manvantara that the Lord was born of Kasyapa and Adithi as Vamana and put down Bali, the king of the Asuras.

Parasurama laid his axe at the root of the royal race thrice seven times and celebrated a horse-sacrifice to cleanse himself of the dark sin. He made a present of the earth to Kasyapa, who turned upon him and said "You shall not abide on the earth you have parted with to me—no, not during nights." So, Parasu-rama aimed a shaft at the ocean which gave him dry land to live upon.—V. R. I. 76.

He is the seer of Rig Veda VI, 29; IX, 64, 67, 91, 92, 103; I, 99.

To grace my name—It is an article of faith with the Aryans that childlessness is the outcome of some heinous sin in the individual's past lives; the hell named Puth opens wide to receive the unhappy wretch; and a son rightly deserves his name *Puthra* in that he saves his father from it. What is the rationale of it ? We observe that a man of unbounded wealth, but childless, exclaims with a heavy heart "Alas ! I am not blessed with a child to whom I can hand down all this wealth that I had been at so much pains to acquire. Now, it must go to strangers whom I know not, whom I love not". But, poor men might at least be free from this. No, the books do not exempt them, but lay down the law for all. Why should we desire offspring so eagerly, rich and poor, high and low ?

Every member of the Aryan nation comes down into the world to carry out certain definite work which he alone could do. Certain duties are incumbent upon him ; he should provide for his wife, children and kinsmen whom his past karma has grouped round him. He should tread

the steps that raise him from his present stage in evolution to a higher one. (This is his Dharma). He should master the mysteries of the path of action and the path of wisdom and exemplify them in his life, that other egos on the course of evolution might lead a happy and useful life here and partake more and more in the work of the Lord. He should bring down peace and plenty upon the earth by performing sacrifices to the inhabitants of the subtle worlds, the Devas, the elementals, and the like. He should pass through the portals of Initiation into Liberation. Now it is laid upon every one to do his share of this altruistic work ; not less important is his responsibility of putting in his place one who could carry on his work, at least as well. If he be pure, unselfish, wise and loving, he attracts to himself egos of a similar temperament and progress to take birth of him ; for, he alone can furnish vehicles of the required stamp. If he be otherwise, good and pure souls keep clear of him. Hence, he should purify himself by rites and penances of every sin that bars his path ; he might be sure of being blessed with a son after his heart. When the Lord has assigned a certain post to us in His universe, it is the height of ingratitude and treason if we quit it without placing a fit substitute therein. This is what is designated as the heinous sin.

39. *Northern banks* :—Ayodhya was on its southern banks.

Brahma-rakshasas :—Persons who are guilty of grievous sins and die without purifying themselves by adequate penances ; those who receive as gifts things prohibited by the ordinances ; and those who perform sacrifices and rites for such as are not qualified thereunto—are born as Brahma-rakshasas. They are experts in the performance of Yagas and Yagnas, and in the probable lapses therein. They eagerly wait for any such sins ; imperfect religious acts form their portion and go to strengthen them. (They are Brahmanas

who are guilty of lapses and slips in the performance of sacrifices.—*Thilaka*).

40. *Sanath-kumara* :—There were ten creations of Brahma—Mahath, Ahankara, Thanmathras, Indriyas, Vai-karika-devas and Manas, the five kinds of Thamasa creation, the mineral and vegetable kingdom, the animal, the human and the Kumaras—*Bh.* III, 10.

Brahma was not satisfied with his Thamasic creation ; he purified himself by meditation and brought forth the Kumaras—Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanathana, Sanathsujatha, Sanathkumara, Sana and Kapila. Karma touches them not. They have to gain nothing from Thapas or meditation. Blessed with eternal youth, their consciousness is ever centred in Brahman. “Children!” said Brahma unto them “propagate yourselves.” But their feet were on the path of Renunciation and the commands of their father made no impression upon them ; whereat Brahma was worth—*Bh.* III, 10 and 12.

Once upon a time they repaired to Vaikuntha to offer worship to Vishnu, when Jaya and Vijaya stopped them at the seventh portal. “What is this?” mildly asked the divine youths “No one comes here into this world but those whose hearts are utter white and free of any stain of desire or hate. You seem to be out of place in this region of serenity. Every one has the right of access to the great Father. We fear not the Lord nor does He fear us. You but read your own selves in the hearts of others. The Lord knows no difference between His children. So, perfect yourselves by dwelling for a time in the world of mortals, and come back with a more subdued heart.” The Lord but confirmed the fiat of the Holy Youths ; Jaya and Vijaya were known during their incarnations as Hiranyakasipu and Hiranyaksha, Ravana and Kumbhakarna Sisupala and Danthavakra.—*Bh.* III; 15, 16.

The Kumaras are great yogis and embody in themselves perfect wisdom. They stand at the portals of Liberation and turn the hearts of the Jeevas thereto. They are known to the world as Sana, Sanathsugatha, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanathkumara, Sanathana and Kapila.—*M. B. Santhi-parva III, 41.* But the Sankhya Karika of Iswara Krishna gives a different list, as Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanathana, Asoori, Kapila, Vodhu and Panchasikha. The *Koorma* makes them five. The *Linga* places Sanathkumara and Ribhu as the highest of them. Further, it relates how Siva is born in each yuga as the four virgin youths, the sons of Brahma ; during the 29th Kalpa, the Kumaras Sananda, Nandana, Viswanandana, and Upanandana were known as the Swetha Lohitha (white); during the 30th Kalpa they were red in hue and were named Virajas, Vibahu, Visoka and Visvabhavana ; during the 31st Kalpa they were yellow in colour and black in the 32nd.

Once upon a time they sat in meditation to fathom the mysteries of the Lord, but with scant success. They prayed to Mahadeva to help them in their need ; when three crores and half of years had passed over their heads, the Mahayogi appeared in their midst as Dakshinamoorthi and taught them under the shade of the sacred banyan tree. The Chinmudra (a mystical gesture with the fingers) solved their doubts—*Athmaavidya-vilasa of Sadasiva Brahman.*

King Dhritharashtra was sore vexed at heart when his sons suffered defeat and disgrace at the hands of the Pandavas. A fit of dispassion came over him and he requested his brother Vidura, the wise one, to impart to him the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. But Vidura reminded him that his present birth did not qualify him as a teacher of Brahma-vidya ; so he prayed to Sanath-kumara, who came down to the Kaurava king and discoursed long and wisely upon the Divine Science. Vidura-prajagara or Sanath-sujatheeeyya is the name given to it in the Bharatha (*Udyoga-parva 41 to 46*).

There is a Samhitha that goes by the name of Sanath-kumara.

Rishyasringa:—He is one of the Saptharshis in the coming 8th or Savarni-manvantara—*Bh.* VIII, 13. Rig Veda X, 136 was seen by him.

He had the face of a deer and a single horn growing on it (*Kamba Ramayanam*, P. 10.).

Vibhandaka, the son of Kasyapa, underwent a course of stern Thapas immersed in the deep waters of a lake. Urvasi, the queen of Apsarasas, came there one day to disport herself in the cool waters. The sage was bewitched with her beauty and his thejas radiated from his body in consequence. A doe came there to quench his thirst, drew it into itself and grew big with child. A son of unrivalled lustre came out of its womb, a wise One from his birth. The doe was a celestial nymph whom Brahma had condemned to take that body to expiate a sin. “In your next birth” said He “a mighty sage will call you his mother and it shall be the end of your troubles.”

Romapada, king of Anga, uttered an untruth to a Brahmana ; and in consequence, the priestly class excommunicated him. No one would officiate in his rites and ceremonies. Indra withheld from his kingdom the life-giving rain. His people suffered terrible miseries. He sent for wise and holy Brahmanas and prayed them to advise him some means of bringing down rain. They took council among themselves and said “The Brahmanas are wroth with you. Seek a way to pacify them. Further, it is Rishyasringa and no other that could bring into your kingdom the rain you so much need.” Romapada left his kingdom and returned to it only after expiating his grievous sin by penances and fasts which satisfied the high Brahmanas. His ministers advised him to bring Rishyasringa into his dominions through the bewitching snares of courtesans.

One of them grown old in her profession said to the king, " Give me but the necessary help and I undertake to bring you the great saint into your kingdom of his own accord." She got what she wanted and left for the dark forests with a choice bevy of damsels. She built a spacious barge to resemble a holy hermitage, stocked it with everything that could allure the senses, moored it near the forest home of Vibhandaka and despatched keen-witted girls to take note of the movements and habits of young Rishyasringa.

One day she called aside her daughter, in whose skill and tact she had utmost confidence, and sent her to entrap Rishyasringa with definite instructions carefully given. The siren came upon the guileless youth when he was alone in his cottage, saluted him with profound respect and said " Holy one ! Is it well with the sages that dwell hereabouts ? Is your supply of fruits, roots and fuel plentiful ? Do you find this spot to your liking ? The ascetics that have made this their abode—does their store of merit increase ever ? Your father of mighty wisdom—does he progress on the path of holiness ? Does his love towards you broaden out like the mighty Ganga ? And do you go through your round of sacred duties and lay by no small store of wisdom and merit ?" To which, the young hermit answered back all joyfully, " Shining one ! You are blazing with spiritual lustre ; and no fitter object can I find of my respects and hospitality. Do me the favor to accept of me such poor things as my humble abode can furnish—fruits, sweet roots, water to wash and drink and a seat for the tired limbs. What happy hermitage calls you its dweller ? Oh ! You are god-like in your beauty and splendour. Please inform me what particular course of austerities or vows is being followed by you at present ?" " Son of Kasyapa !" replied the Circe. See you yon hill standing like a sentinel over

your calm retreat ? Behind it and but six miles from here is my humble cottage, a marvel of beauty. It goes against the rules of my order to receive respect and service at the hands of such like you. Nay, it is but meet that I should wait upon you and do thy behests. I have made a vow and I request you to help me keep it by allowing me to fold you in my arms." "Nay, but accept of me these rare fruits that I have procured for you" cried Rishyasringa all earnestly ; but, the siren snatched them from his hands and flung them far away with a look of supreme contempt and disgust. She gave him things to eat and drink that was utterly unmeet for him ; but, to him they were unspeakably delicious. She adorned him with garlands and chaplets of fragrant flowers. She decked him in silk and gold and flowered vestments. She held to his lips rare drinks and potent. She cooed to him, fondled him, hung round him, looked into the depths of his eyes, and sent little thrills of vague joy through his nerves by her silvery peels of laughter. Anon, she took a ball and tossed it to and fro, high and low, this way and that, displaying the rounded perfection of her form, her shapely limbs and her graceful movements. Then, she sprang at him, pressed him to her throbbing heart time and oft, gazed with looks of unutterable love into the calm depths of his eyes, tore herself away from him with a hasty "I am close upon the hour of the fire-sacrifice," and vanished from sight.

Rishyasringa stood rooted to the spot, his heart far away with the damsel that had stolen it. His senses in a whirl, his mind dark and confused, his body a prey to unknown sensations, he sighed like a furnace and lived but in the dream of his recollections of that eventful day. And upon him thus musing came his sire Vibhandaka, the sage of stern vows. His eyes of tawny hue even as the monarch of the forests, his body coated with shaggy hair, he was a curious

sight to see. His keen eyes fell upon his son sitting lone and dejected with heaving breast and far-away looks. "Rishyasringa ! Light of mine eyes ! Have you performed aright the daily offering of sacred fuel to the Fires ? Did you scrub and wash clean the spoons, the pots and the ladles used in the sacrifice ? Did you milk the cows and tend the calves ? Why are the logs lying about unsplit ? I see your heart clouded, your brain confused, and your senses rebellious. What strangers were here to day ?" And to him replied Rishyasringa as in a dream, " Father ! There came unto our hermitage a Brahmacharin. His hair was black as night, thick, and long and hung in rippling waves round his moon-like face. His limbs shore like molten gold and were lovely beyond expression. Large and lustrous were his eyes, even as the petals of the full-blown lotus. He had the refulgence of the Lord of day and the beauty of a Deva. His locks were plaited in wonderful patterns with golden strings and hung on his back ; and the air around was heavy with the perfume of it. From his neck hung a curious ornament that flashed like chain-lightning through dark clouds. His breast was soft and high without the least suspicion of hair in it. His waist was very slender and smooth as glass. From beneath his loin-cloth hung a golden string very much like my own girdle. He had some curious ornaments on his feet and wrists that reminded me of my rosary ; when he moved, they sounded sweet even as the swans when they swim joyously over the calm waters of the lakes. The clothes he wore, were finer, softer, and more beautiful than my dress of bark. The male Koil sings not sweeter than his melodious tones that enslaved my heart. His hair was parted upon his forehead and clung to it. His eyes were covered with two lovely Chakravaka birds. A curious fruit, all unknown to me, was in his hands

which he struck again and again upon the earth ; and all rebellious, it rose higher and higher at each stroke. It was a wonderful sight to see ; and all the while, he darted hither and thither like a graceful creeper blown by wind. I have no words to express the joy that his god-like presence gave me. He would not accept from me fruits, roots, water to wash and drink nor any of the rites of hospitality; for that was his vow. Then he gave me many fruits, the like of which I have never come across in our woods. They have no rind, no stone. He gave me a wonderful drink very sweet to taste. It has filled me with inexpressible delight; the earth spins around me and all it supports. Just look at these fragrant garlands woven with golden strings. Since he left this place, I am not myself ; my heart seems to be weighted with lead ; an ever-raging fire consumes my limbs. I must very soon go to him and request his presence here every day. Grant me leave to go to him even now. I must practise the same vow as he ; I must become like him. If I see him not, my heart would burst of grief."

Vibhandaka listened to these strange words, all unmeet for an anchorite's lips and sternly cautioned his son against unknown perils. "Child ! These are Rakshasas of unbounded might and soul-compelling loveliness. They wander through the dark woods, clothed in witching beauty to entrap the unwary hermits, to cloud their senses and to ruin their hard-earned thapas. Many of our brethren have fallen victims to their wiles and have lost the bright regions on high won by dire austerities. No one approaches them whose senses are well under control, whose heart is set upon reaching the worlds of the Blessed ; nor, does he so much as look at them. The drink that was given you is all impure for such lips as yours. Wicked men and sinners partake of it and are driven into madness and crime thereby. These bright garlands are not for us whose wealth

is counted by the steps we have climbed on the Ladder of Perfection." Thus and more did he caution his darling son ; and having laid upon him strict injunctions not to leave the cottage, he went out in search of those that had worked woe and confusion in the heart of his boy. But, three days and nights did he roam in vain through the dark forests, seeking for those who ever kept beyond the reach of his anger.

Meanwhile Rishyasringa went out to lay in the daily store of fruits ; and his tempter, who was ever hovering about while the old father sought her afar, flashed before his eyes like a sweet vision of beauty. The boy sprang forth to meet her and cried with trepidation, " Let me have a look at your lovely Asrama before my father comes back." The girls were but too willing ; they enticed him by many a wile, by many a glance, by many a rippling laugh, by many a flower-soft touch to where their barge lay, painted cunningly to look like a hermitage. He entered it ; they crowded round him and engaged him in many a game and in many a talk so that he knew not that the barge bore him away from his native forests even unto where Romapada's capital lay.

And, the king of Anga was with eager eyes scanning the river up and down to catch a sight of him who was to save his land from ruin and destruction. With a joyful heart and humble head bowed low over folded palms, did he welcome the young sage into his kingdom and placed him in his harem, even where the fairest, the loveliest and the purest of the daughters of his country dwelt. But, no sooner did Rishyasringa step from the barge on to the earth than the heavens opened and the waters came down. Romapada, beside himself with pleasure, gave Santha, his daughter, in marriage to the son of Vibhandaka. And having a wary eye on the likely approach of the irate sage in search of his son,

he placed in his route countless herds of cattle ; the fields were busy ploughed by cheerful hinds ; the shepherds and the superintendents of cattle were strictly enjoined thus :— “ If the holy sage Vibhandaka should come this way and ask of you whether you have seen his son, you shall, on pain of your lives, make this answer one and all. ‘ Holy one ! These herds that graze as far as the eye can see, these fields that extend right up to where the heaven and the earth meet, and we ourselves, with our kith and kin, do all belong to the Rishi Rishyasringa, our gracious lord. We are his, to command, body and soul. Upon our eyes and ears lie his behests.”

Vibhandaka came back to his cottage with a heavy load of fruits, roots, fuel and sacred wood ; his first care was for his son, whom he found not where he left him. Rage caught him in its merciless grasp ; he saw with his clear vision that it was an infamous trick played upon his boy, all innocent ; and he strode forth with mighty steps from his lowly abode, towards the town of Champa, resolved to reduce to ashes Romapada, his kingdom and those that dwelt in it. But, the fatigue of travel and the pangs of hunger were too much for his penance-wasted frame. As chance would have it, he came even to where the shepherds were placed by the cunning king. They received him with royal hospitality and he abode with them for the night. “ Whom do you call your master ?” asked he of them in evident curiosity. “ Saintly one ! ” replied they “ even Rishyasringa, your renowned son. We are his slaves and live but to obey his behests. These wide lands and these countless herds are his. We wait for you here by his orders and we have but been able to discharge towards you a tithe of what he would have us do unto you.” Thereafter, he came upon such receptions every now and then, all along his way to the capital. His anger

gradually exhausted itself and Romapada found him in a fit mood to receive his respects and hospitality and to listen with a lenient ear to his excuses.

And Vibhandaka saw in the royal palace his son Rishyasringa who shone even as a god, and his daughter-in-law Santha, whose innocence and purity enthralled his eyes and heart. He made the best of the situation and returned to his forest home, having enjoined his son to remain at Champa until a child should be born of his loins to sit upon the throne of Anga. And Rishyasringa did so—*M. B. Vanaparva*, 113.

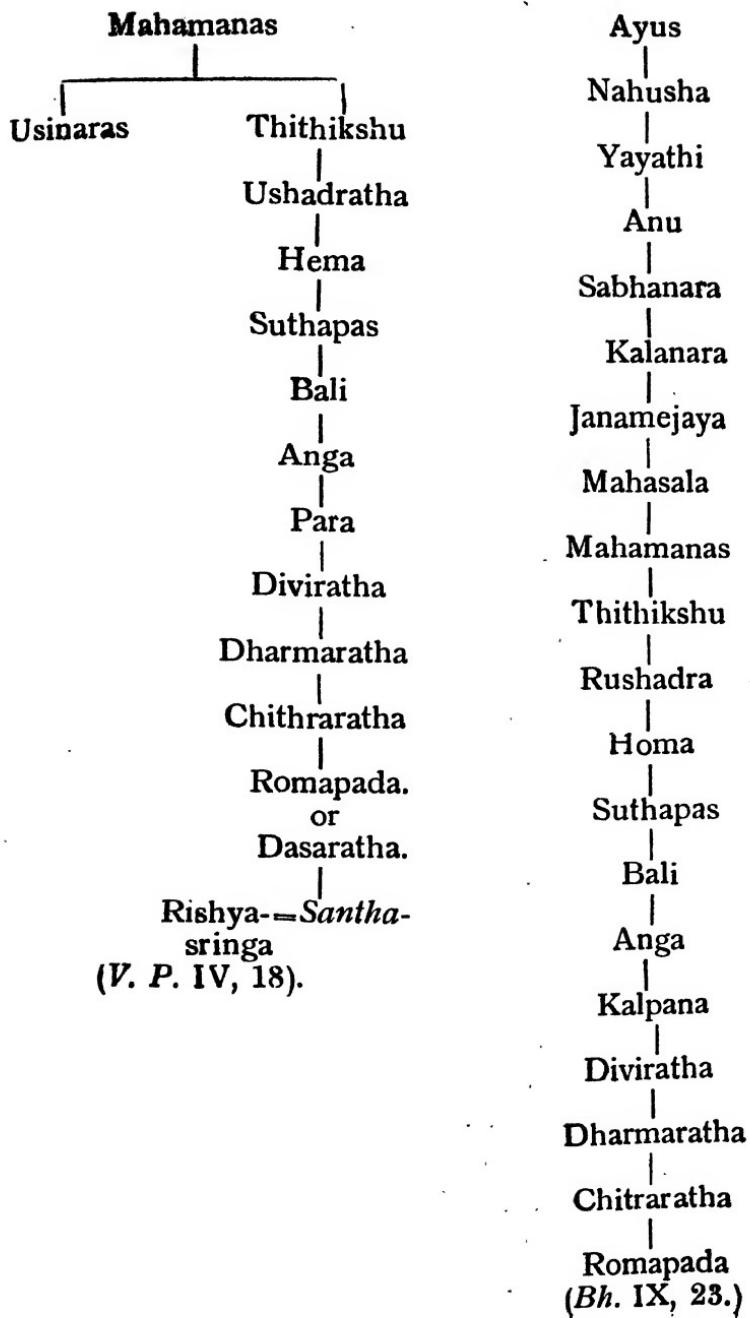
Brahmacharya :—A celibate should avoid during that stage in life intoxicating drinks, flesh perfumes, garlands, essences, extracts, women, wanton cruelty to animals, shoes, umbrella, music, dance, musical instruments, gambling, gossip, scandal, untruth, and conscious injury to others. He should not look upon women with a lustful heart nor embrace them.—*Manu*.

Anga :—It is not the modern Bengal as some affirm, but Bhagalpur and a large portion of Behar. It adjoined the kingdom of Dasaratha and spread about the confluence of the Ganga and the Sarayu.

Romapada.

Kalanara	
Srinjaya	
Puranjaya	
Janamejaya	
Mahamani	

Brahma	
Athri	
Soma— <i>Thara</i>	
Budha— <i>Ila</i>	
<i>Urvashi</i> —Purooravas	



Give him your daughter for a wife :—No greater expiation for his sin could he find than giving his daughter in marriage to a pure and holy Brahmacharin.

41. *Without affecting :—You need not apprehend any danger to his chastity.*

Q:—Rishyasringa must have been defiled by the touch of prostitutes and by having eaten of what they gave him. His spiritual might and splendour must have diminished in consequence. Then, how could his presence in Anga be potent enough to bring about the rains that came not ?

A. The sage sinned not, in that he was a stranger to women all long and the idea of sex never entered into his heart during the period he spent with the courtesans. He looked upon them as hermits like himself. But, even if the physical contact with them had really affected his purity, it was nothing before the mighty fire of his thapas.

Q. Nay, he was a pure-souled celibate ; he had mastered the Vedas and the Sastras and ought to have been thoroughly acquainted with woman, her nature, her wiles and of man's relations to her. His studies must have taught him that celibacy and women were incompatible. Was it not natural for him to have come into contact with the women that dwell in the forest and in the hermitages ? If he was a congenital imbecile, unable to distinguish between a man and a woman, we cannot credit him with brains to study and master the profundities of Sanskrit lore. He could not have performed any thapas worth mentioning, nor have been endowed with the power to bless.

A. Rishyasringa was in reality one of the Sons of Wisdom. He was a knower of Brahman, who had risen to the divinity latent in him as it is in every one of us. To him the whole universe presented no illusory distinctions of sex, creed, colour, rank or wealth. His eyes saw into the heart of things. Such a one is untouched by sin. He knew through

his clear vision that there lay hidden in his past, some karma as yet unexhausted, that would bring him into marital relations with Santha, the daughter of Romapada. He anticipated the arrival of the young girls and behaved so that they might not suspect his real nature and keep aloof from him. He made as if he was caught in their trap. His father Vibhandaka, to whom it was no secret, accepted the situation and did not curse his son or the king—*Thilaka*.

45. *Assured* :—One should worship the sacred fires only when he has taken upon himself the life of a householder ; and he alone is qualified to conduct a sacrifice.

48. 1. *Upon Dasaratha came the desire* :—He was blessed in every thing that life could give ; millions looked up to him for the fulfilment of their prayers ; yet, he had no son to continue his name on earth. He decided that he could in no other way destroy the sins in his past life that stood in his way than by performing the horse-sacrifice, for, says the Sruthi “ He who performs a horse-sacrifice is freed from all sins, is freed from the heinous sin of having taken the life of a Brahmana ; ” while the Smrithis enjoin a Sarvabhowma (Lord-paramount) to conduct a horse-sacrifice. Sumanthra lifted for him the veil that hung over his past, even so little ; and the king brought down Rishyasringa and his wife Santha to Ayodhya, under the guise of a friendly visit to himself. When spring came on again, he made ready for the horse-sacrifice.

2. *The horse-sacrifice* :—Yagna is the offering to the Devas of anything that we hold as our own, with the consecratory Manthras appropriate to them. It should be enjoined in the Veda ; it should be such as confers the highest good that can fall to the lot of man, upon the performer and the nation of which he is a unit. Clarified butter, flour, milk, grain, the juice of the Soma creeper, animals, burnt offerings, cooked food, curds, cream, and

the like may be offered to the Devas, our elder brothers in evolution.

The Brahmana, the Kshathriya and the Vaisya are qualified to perform the sacrifices ; but, the last is debarred from the sacrifices that go by the name of *Bahu-yajamana*. Women, duly married according to the sacrament, are entitled to take part in the sacrifice. Physical deformity, sexual impotence, ignorance of the Vedas, the deadly sins, and birth among the Soodras, the Chandalas and the mixed castes disqualify a man ; but the Rathakaras take part in such rites as *Agnyadhanā*. The word means chariot-makers ; but, *Apadeva* in his *Meemamsa-nyaya-prakas* gives the name to a clan called Saudhanvanas. These are the descendants of *Bribhu*. In later times, a Rathakara was the offspring of a Mahishiya and a Karani. (A Mahishiya is the offspring of a Kshathriya and a Vaisya ; while a Karani comes from the mixture of the Vaisya and the Soodra castes). Moreover, the chief of the Nishadas (the class of foresters) has a place in the sacrifice known as *Gavethuka*.

The thorough study of the Vedas and the status of a householder are indispensable for any one who would perform a sacrifice: But, a Brahmachari who violates his vow of celibacy is directed to perform a sacrifice with an ass. But, as such have no Agnihothras to perform, the Laukikagni (lay-fires) are to be used in the sacrifice; the offerings are not cooked in potsherds, but on the ground; the heart, the tongue and other members of the sacrificial animal are to be offered up in the water and not in the fire.

The yagnas are classified into, the Paka-yagnas in which cooked offerings are made; the Havis-yagnas in which clarified butter, milk, curds, grain, and such like uncooked articles are offered; and the Soma-yagnas in which the juice of the Soma plant is offered.

<i>Pakayagnas.</i>	<i>Haviryagnas.</i>	<i>Somayagnas.</i>
Ashtaka.	Agnyadheya.	Agnishtoma.
Parvana.	Agnihothra.	Athyagnishtoma.
Sraddha.	Darsapoornarnasa.	Ukthya.
Sravani.	Chathurmasya.	Shodasi.
Agrahayani.	Agrayaneshti.	Vajapeya.
Chaithri.	Niroodha-pasub-	Athirathra.
Asvayugi.	andha.	Apthoryama.
	Southramani.	

Gauthama Smrithi.

Aupasana.	Pinda-pithri-yagna	Do
Vaiswadeva.	instead of	
Parvana.	Agnyadheya.	
Ashtaka.		
Masi-sraddha.		
Sarpabali.		
Esanabali.		

Apasthamba-soothra with the commentary of Dhoortha-swami.

A Brahmana is directed to perform the Agnihothra in the morning and the evening, the Ishtis on the new and full moon days, the Agrayaneshti before he eats of the harvest of the year, the Chathurmasya at the end of every three months, the Pasubhandha once in six months and the Soma-yaga at the end of the year.

The day on which the juice of the Soma creeper is extracted and offered into the fire, is called the *Suthyahas*. Such sacrifices are known as the *Ekahas* (having only one pressing-day). The Agnishtoma and the six other sacrifices are of this kind. The *Aheena* yagas require from two to eleven days for their celebration. The *Dvadasaha* is a soma-yaga and runs through twelve days. The *Sathras* continue from thirteen to hundred days or beyond. The *Samvathsarikas* require one, two or three years to perform ;

the *Gava-mayana* is one such and takes three years to finish. The *Aharganas* are conducted day and night and the *Dwadasaha* is their type.

The *Ekahas* have three pressings (Savanas)—morning mid-day, and evening. The juice of the Soma plant is extracted by pressing, kept in certain vessels, offered to the devas and partaken by the priests and the performer.

The Udgatha and his assistants recite *Sthothras* on fixed occasions ; while the Hotha and his men follow with the recitations of certain Riks named the *Sastras*.

A ram is offered to Agni and Soma in the *Agnishtoma* sacrifice. Twelve sthothras and twelve sasthras are recited during the three savanas in the following order.

Morning Savana.

Bahishpavamana-sthothra by the	Udgatha,
Ajya-sasthra	„ Hotha.
Ajya-sthothra	„ Udgatha.
Prauga-sasthra	„ Hotha.
Ajya-sthothra, I, II, III,	„ Maithra Varuna
Ajya-sasthras, I, II, III,	„ Brahmanachhamsi and Achhavaka

Mid-day Savana.

Madhyandina-pavamana-sthothra by the	Udgatha
Marudvatheeya-sasthra	„ Hotha
Prishta-sthothra I	„ Udgatha
Nishkevalya-sasthra I	„ Hotha
Prishta-sthothras, II, III & IV	„ Udgatha
Nishkevalya-sasthras, II, III, & IV	„ Hotha's assis- tants.

Evening Savana.

Arbhava-pavamana-sthothra by the	Udgatha
Vaisvadevat-sasthra by the	Hotha

Agnishtoma-sama by the Udgatha

Agnimarutha-sasthra by the Hotha

In the *Ukthya* sacrifice, aram is offered to Indra and Agni. Three *Ukthya-sthothras* and three *Ukthya-sastras* are added to the recitations during the evening Savana.

In the *Shodasi* sacrifice, an animal is separately offered to Indra. A sasthra, a sthothra and a Somagraha are added to those of the *Ukthya*.

In the *Athyagnishtoma* sacrifice the sthothras, sastras, somagrahas and the animal to Indra are to be added on to the service during the *Agnishtoma*.

In the *Athirathra* sacrifice there is an addition of a ram to the goddess Sarasvathi ; and three Paryayas to the Shodasi sthothras and sastras (a Paryaya comprises 4 sthothras and 4 sastras. These are recited during nights and each round is followed by offerings and distribution of the Soma juice. At dawn there is a recitation of the Sandhya-sthothra from the Sama-Veda, which is followed by the Hotha's Aswinee sasthra. The Aswini-devas receive an offering thereupon.

The *Apthoryama* adds 4 sthothras and sastras to those of the *Athirathra*.

The *Vajapeya* adds the *Vajapeya-sama* and the *Vajapeya sasthra* to those of the *Shodasi*. A fourth animal is offered to Sarasvathi and 17 to the Prajapathi. The Brahmana and the Kshathriya are qualified to perform this. A chariot race forms an interesting part of the ceremony, when the royal performer distances his competitors.

Abhijith, Visvajith and *Ayushtoma* are parts of the *Gavamayana*.

The *Agnishtoma* is a type of the above and deserves detailed mention.

It takes five days to perform—Deekshahas, Prayaneeyahas, ~~Pravargyahas~~, *Agneeshomeeyahas* and *Suthyahas*.

Deekshahas.

The performer (yajamana) should have finished his vedic studies and entered the life of a house-holder.

1. He should first go through the following Sankalpa (declaration of a vow) to expiate the sin of not having performed a yagna during the last three generations—"I perform such and such a sacrifice with an animal-offering to Indra and Agni, another to the Aswins to remove any stain of non-performance of my duties as a Brahmana, and also with the usual offering of an animal to Agni and Soma."

2. Next, he says "Agni is my Hotha in the sacrifice I perform ; Soorya in my Adhwaryu ; Chandra is my Brahma; Parjanya is my Udgatha ; the Apdevathas are the Brahmanachhamsi and the rest ; the Rasmis are my Chamasadwaryus." He chooses a man to be the Somaprayaka and sends him to select his human priests. The latter visits the abodes of the Adhwaryu, and his assistants, the Prathiprasthatha, the Neshta, and the Unnetha ; the Brahma and his assistants, the Brahmanachhamsi the Agneedhra, the Potha ; the Hotha, and his assistants, the Maithravaruna, the Achhavaka and the Gravasthuth ; and the Udgatha and his assistants, the Prasthatha, the Prathihartha, and the Subrahmanya and prays them thus :—"So and so is to perform—sacrifice on—day with—Dakshina. You are requested to officiate as—in—Gana." When they had given their consent, he chooses the Sadasya(who represent the audience) as the 17th priest. They come to the dwelling of the Yajamana and are entertained with Madhuparka and other rites of hospitality.

3. The Agnihothra-fire into which offerings had been made till then, is caused to be absorbed in the Arani (fire-producing apparatus) and the sacrificer and his wife proceed to the sacrificial grounds along with the priests.

4. The fire is produced from the Arani. All eatables provided for the sacrifice are divided into two groups—one to be used in the rite itself and the other for the use of the Brahmanas that come to witness it.

5. After the performance of the Deekshaneeya Ishti (a minor sacrifice preliminary to the consecratory vow) the sacrificer takes upon himself the Deeskha (the vow of Initiation).

6. He is shaved, takes his bath and cleans the teeth with a twig of the fig tree.

7. He bathes again and along with his wife, clothes himself in new garments to the recitation of the prescribed manthras (except in case of the wife).

8. The couple partake of very dainty food to the full.

9. The body is smeared all over with butter ; the eyes are painted with collyrium; a girdle of munja grass, a turban and an upper cloth are given him. The skin of the black antelope hangs on his back, while his hand grasps a staff of the fig tree.

10. The prepared milk known as Vratha is given in separate vessels to the sacrificer and his wife to drink.

11. They keep awake the whole night listening to holy themes.

Prayaneeyahas.

1. It begins with an expiatory rite towards any unconscious lapses in the rites of the previous day.

2. Next follows the Prayaneeya Ishti.

3. The soma creeper is bought of a Brahmana in exchange for ten articles, placed in a cart and brought with great pomp near the Ahavaneeya fire-place.

4. An Ishti of hospitality is performed in honor of king Soma.

5. The priests dip their hands in clarified butter and swear to preserve the utmost cordiality among themselves to the end of the sacrifice.

6. Thereafter, the Pravargyasambharana (preparing the materials for the Pravargya) takes place, which is followed by the Pravargya itself, when goat's milk, cow's milk and curds are mixed and offered into the fire, the Hotha reciting meanwhile 150 Riks and the Adhwaryu making libations in the Ahavaneeya fire.

7. Next comes the upasad, an Ishti in which clarified butter is offered into the fire.

8. And lastly, the Nama-subrahmanya-ahvana when the priest known as Subrahmanya calls upon Indra to come down—days from then to receive his portion of the offerings in the—sacrifice performed by—.

9. The evening closes with a Pravargya and an Upsad as before.

Pravargyahas.

1. Two Pravargyas and two Upasads.
2. In the interval between these, the Agnivedi (Fire-altar) is constucted.
3. The Subrahmanya-invocation.

Agneeshomeeyahas.

1. Two Pravargyas and two Upasads in succession.
2. The vessels and the materials used in the Pravargya are placed first on the Uththaravedi, then on the Samrat Asandi and carried away after having been placed thrice on the ground meanwhile. The Prasthotha sings Samans the while.
3. The fire is conveyed from the Ahavaneeya altar (Darsapoornamasa) to the Uttharavedi, the Hotha reciting Riks the while.

4. The Havirdhana carts are placed north and south of the Havirdhana ground, the Hotha reciting the mantras all the time.

5. The Darbha (sacred grass) to be used in the sacrifice is prepared with mantras.

6. The Dhishnis (seats) are constructed for the Maithravaruna, Hotha, Brahmanachhamsi, Potha, Neshta, Achhavaka and Agneedhra respectively.

7. The Agneeshoma-pranayana, during which king Soma is taken to the Havirdhana ground and the fire from the Ahavaneeya altar to the Agneedhra-mantapa.

8. The Avanthara-deeksha-visarjana (relief from certain incidental vows); the fingers of the sacrificer, closed with appropriate mantras after the vow of initiation is taken, are opened two on the same day and the rest on this day.

9. The sacrificer and his wife drink of the milk *vratha* after which they take nothing to the end of the sacrifice.

10. The Agneeshomeeya-pasu-prayoga. The Hotha recites mantras, when the sacrificial stake is planted; the animal is dedicated to the Devas. Certain offerings are made into the fire to ensure high regions for the animal.

11. The fire is churned from the Arani and united with the Ahavaneeya-fire. The animal is tied to the stake and the Agneedhra goes round it with the fire in his hands while, the Maithravaruna recites hymns from the Rig Veda. The animal is taken to the Samithra (slaughtering-place) the Hotha and the sacrificer reciting mantras the while. It is put to death with its head to the west, and the legs to the north, without the least noise. Expiatory offerings are made into the fire if it gets afraid or lies down or voids excretions. They sprinkle water on its eleven limbs and the Adhvaryu propitiates its pranas. The rope with which it was tied should be thrown into the Chatvala. Mantras are

chanted while its omentum (vapa) is taken out, spread upon thorns and taken to the Ahavaneeya fire-altar, where the Vapa-homa (offering into the fire the omentum) takes place.

12. As usual, the invocation to Subrahmanya comes next.

13. They bring the Vasatheevari water.

14. The offering of cooked rice (Purodasa) to the deities of the animal is made ; while, the Anga-yaja (offering into the fire pieces from the limbs of the animal) closes the day.

Suthyahas.

1. The Upagraha-sadana (the preparation of the secondary *Grahas*. The vessels in which the Soma juice is kept are called *Grahas* as also the Devas to whom they are offered).

2. The Hotha receives the Prathar-anuvaka, while the Prathiprasthatha gets ready the Purodasa for the morning Savana.

3. The Soma-juice is extracted and kept in the prescribed vessels.

4. The Hotha recites the Bahishpavamana-sthothra which is followed by the taking of the Aswinee-graha and the Agneya-pasu-prayoga (similar to that of the previous day).

5. The morning Savana :—

<i>Udgatha.</i>		<i>Hotha.</i>		
a. Bahishpavamana-sthothra.		a. Ajya-sasthra.	...	I
b. Ajya-sthothra. ...	I	b. Prauga-sasthra.	...	
c. Do. ...	II	c. Ajya-sasthra.	...	II
d. Do. ...	III	d. Do.	...	III
e. Do. ...	IV	e. Do.	...	IV

6. Midday-savana is conducted like the morning savana.

<i>Udgatha.</i>			<i>Hotha.</i>		
a.	Madhyandina-pavamana sthothra.		a.	Maruthvathee-sasthra.	
b.	Prishta-sthota ..	I	b.	Nishkevalya-sasthra.	
c.	Do. ...	II	c.	Do. II (Maithra varuna).	
d.	Do. ...	III	d.	Do. III Brahmanach- hamsi).	
e.	Do. ...	IV	e.	Do. IV. (Acchavaka).	

6 *Evening savana.*

<i>Udgatha.</i>			<i>Hotha.</i>		
a.	Arbhava-pavamana sthothra.		a.	Vaisvadeva-sasthra.	
b.	Yagna-yagneeya-sthota.		b.	Agnimarutha-sasthra.	

The Avabhritha day.

(a) The Avabhritha Ishti is performed, during which all the offerings are made into the water and not into the fire. The sacrificer and his wife get into the water, rub each other's backs, bathe and come back to the sacrificial hall.

(b) The Udayaneeya Ishti and the Maithravaruna—ameeksha.

(c) The Garhapathy fire is absorbed into the Arani.

(d) The sacrificer and his wife go to their abodes in great pomp surrounded by the priests.

Thus the Agnishtoma is the Prakrithi or type of the seven Soma-yagas ; the rest are but modifications of this. I give below only those points wherein it differs from the Aswamedha.

1. None but the king is qualified to perform the Aswamedha—"The king who is a Sarvabhauma should perform a. horse-sacrifice—Sruthi. " He who performs a horse-sacrifice destroys all his sins ; destroys the sin of a Brahminicide"—Sruthi.

2 "It has three Savana (pressing) days. The sacrificial hall should be in holy spots like the Pushkara-vana, the

Gauthama-vana, the Varanasi, the Kuruksheethra and the Naimisaranya.

3. "It should begin on the eighth day of the bright fortnight in the month of Phalgun ; or on the ninth.—*Kathyaya-na-srauha-soothra*, XX, 2.

4. He must make a declaration (Sankalpa)—"I mean to perform the Aswamedha-yaga on the morning of the full-moon day in the month of Chithra."

5. The Somapravaka chooses the priests in their own dwellings. The Sangrahini Ishti is performed, to which are brought upon chariots, elephants or horses the Adhwaryu, the Brahma, the Hotha, and the Agneedhra, attended by the king's officials. On the full-moon day of the month of Vaisakha, a bull is offered to the Prajapathi ; to be present at which the Maithra-varuna and the Prathi-prasthatha are similarly brought. On the next new moon day the Udgatha is invited with like ceremony. When the next spring comes about, the Deekshaneeya Ishti is performed, when the Prasthatha is brought with honour to sing the Saman. Within three days from the commencement of the Deeksha (consecration), the other eight are brought in—Brahmanachhamsi, Achhavaka, Neshta, Prathihartha, Gravasthuth, Potha, Unnetha and Subrahmany.

6. Water from the skies, from wells, from tanks, and from rivers are brought from the four quarters to be used in cooking the food on the Brahmaudana day. It is partaken by the Adhwaryu, the Brahma, the Hotha and the Udgatha, each receiving one thousand gold coins as a fee. What remains of the clarified butter mixed with the food is used to soak a cord made of munja grass about 15 yards long. The sacrificial horse is tied with it.

7. The animal should be white in the fore parts of its body and black in its hind parts—Ib. 34. It must not be allowed to approach the mare,

8. The Sangrahani Ishti is performed on the full-moon day of the month of Chithra ; the Thraidhathavi Ishti comes on the full-moon day of the month of Vaisakha in the next year ; the Deekshaneeya Ishti is begun thereafter, and is completed in seven days; the Deeksha ceremonies require 3 days over it. The next day is the Prayaneeyahas, on which the invocation to Subrahmanya begins. Till then the priests may be brought in. The Brahmaudana is performed on the next day after the Sangrahani. The horse is tied with a cord of munja grass and taken to the bathing place along with a dog adorned with two natural whirls of white hair above the eyes. The aunt's son of the sacrificer on his father's side goes before it, the son of his younger aunt goes behind it, followed by a harlot's son with a black pestle in his hand.' When the dog and the horse are in the water at a depth where the dog's feet do not touch the bottom, the Adhwaryu orders the harlot's son to strike to it dead with the pestle. It is placed at the feet of the horse and then thrown away to the right. The horse is then bathed and taken to the bank. Hundred sons of crowned monarchs assist the Adhwaryu in sprinkling the horse with consecrated water, their faces turned to the west ; hundred sons of kings who are not eligible for the crown stand with the Brahma and sprinkle it facing the north ; hundred chario-teers and heads of villages assist the Hotha to sprinkle it, facing the east; while hundred Kshattas (born of vaisyas and soodras) and hundred heads of the royal treasury help the Udgatha to sprinkle it facing the south ; thereafter, the Adhwaryu sprinkles it on all sides.

9. Offerings are made into the fire to the recitation of the horse's names, deeds and form; after which it is let loose.

10. Hundred armed princes, heir-apparents to royal crowns, follow it on splendid chariots ; hundred uncrown-

ed princes, hundred vaisyas (merchant classes) and hundred soodras. As it would naturally travel far that night when the mood is upon it, and as there would be no one who could efficiently take care of it, it is taken on the first evening to a charioteer's house, where Dhriti-homas are performed in its hoof-marks: this is intended to bring back the animal to the tethering spot at night wherever it may wander during the day ; and it would stay there till morning. If it is any how lost, another animal of the same age, form and colour should be procured.

11. Every morning to the end of the year the sacrificer should offer to the God Savitha, food cooked in eight pot-sherds (ashtakapala). At mid-day, another offering is made of food cooked in ten pot-sherds to Savitha and Prasavitha. During the afternoon, an offering is again made to Savitha in twelve pot-sherds. In the twelfth month the horse comes back and is stabled in a pen built of fig wood.

12. From the Brahmaudana day to the end of the Aswamedha, the sacrificer makes over all his powers to the Adhwaryu, who sees to the preparation of the sacrificial materials, to the invitation of quests, to the appointment of officials and servants and to every detail of the rite. The preparation of the fire named Ukha on the last new-moon-day of the previous year and the other rites as the Thraidhathavi and the Deekshaneeya Ishti should be performed in the sacrificial ground itself.

13. On the new-moon day of the next month of Phalgun, the sacrificer enters the sacrificial hall with the priests to the music of the conch, the drum, the tabor, and the flute, while holy Brahmanas bless him in Vedic hymns.

14. Twelve Pravargyas and twelve Upasads are to be performed on the three days.

15. At night-fall on the first day after the completion of the Pathnee-samyajana, the 36 Adhwaryus seat them-

selves on high lofts made of fig tree and offer into the Aha-vaneeyaa-fire all night without intermission food, clarified butter, and eight other prescribed articles in ebony ladles with long handles.

16. On the Aupavasathya day are the sacrificial posts planted. Near the Agnivedi (fire-altar) is planted a post by name Agnishta, 21 breasts long and made of Slesh-mathaka wood.

17. On the second day during the Ukthya rite with 21 sthomas, the priests take the horse with them while they recite the Bahishpavamana-mantra. They instal it in the place of the Udgatha. A mare is placed before it. The neighing of the horse is taken to stand for the chant for the Sama Veda, while the reply of the mare is taken to represent the chant by the Udgatha and his assistants. Then, the Adhwaryu says "This horse is verily fitted to participate in this sacrifice, for, it can perform the functions of the Udgatha." Then they take hold of its tail and walk round the fire.

18. It is tied to the post known as Agnishta ; and as the other sacrificial animals are considered to be its members they too are tied to the same. It should be visualized mentally (a thought form must be made) that a sheep with a black neck is tied to the horse's forehead ; an animal dedicated to Poosha is tied behind it ; another animal dedicated to Indra and Poosha is tied above the horse ; two sheep with black throats dedicated to Agni are tied to the fore-legs of the horse ; two animals dedicated to Thwashtra and with thickly coated thighs are tied to the thighs of the horse ; two animals with white backs are dedicated to Brihaspathi and tied to the hind-legs ; an animal with white-spotted stomach is dedicated to Dhatha and tied to the knees ; while a white sheep is dedicated to Soorya and tied to the tail.

19. Hundred tame animals are tied to the twenty stakes ; and the rest to the Agnishtha. Wild animals should be taken round the fire and set free ; while the tame ones should be put to death and offered unto the fire. Then the sacrificial horse is tied by the priests to the right side of the yoke of a chariot, with a horse on each side of it. The royal flag is hoisted and the sacrificer taking his place in it, fully armed and panoplied, drives north to the water's edge. Before the horse is yoked to the chariot, the queen adorns it with gold ornaments on the front ; the Vavatha with silver ornaments on its eastern flanks ; the Parivrithi with ocean products on the west, while the princesses with conch-shells and the like deck its tail. Then the Mahishi spreads clarified butter over it with Guggulu twigs, the Vavatha with reeds and the Parivirthi with munja grass. When it had been given a bath and adorned as above, it is brought to the sacrificial hall and made to partake of the food set apart to Prajapathi.

20. The ladle named Thejani should be used to receive the horse's blood ; it is not so in the case of the other animals. The flesh of the sacrificial horse is placed upon a platter plaited with the twigs of aquatic plants, while platters made of Plaksha twigs are used in the case of other animals. Tame animals should be tied to the sacrificial posts ; the wild ones should be placed in the intervals between the posts securely bound with cords ; turtles, serpents and the like should be kept in cages.

21. The *Brahmodya*—The Brahma takes his place south of the Agnishtha post and the Hotha north of it. The following dialogue is carried on between them :—

Brahma.—What animate thing existed at first ?

Hotha.—The Akasa, from it come the rains.

B.—What is the most beautiful of things ?

H.—The moon-light night adorned with stars.

B.—What is Pilippila (the noise made by a large crowd of people talking at the same time) ?

H.—Sree or material prosperity (a wealthy man's house is thronged with countless persons who depend upon him ; and there alone can you hear such a sound).

B.—Who travels (sun) alone ?

H.—Soorya.

B.—Who is born again ?

H.—Chandra (Moon)

B.—What is the best remedy against cold and snow ?

H.—Agni.

B.—What is the ground in which the seed is sown ?

H.—The earth.

B.—What is the most excellent spot of it ?

H.—The Yaga-vedi (sacrificial altar).

B.—Which is the navel of the earth ?

H.—Yagna.

B.—What is the essence of the strong horse ?

H.—Soma.

B.—What is the limit of speech ?

H.—Brahman.

22. The Prathi-prasthatha conducts the king's wives to the sacrificial hall. Thrice from right to left, thrice from left to right and thrice again from right to left they go round the horse. Then the Adhwaryu makes the queen lie by the side of the horse, covers them both with white silk and recites the manthras beginning with *Ambe ! Ambaly Ambike !* The Deva who is invoked to take possession of the horse would bless her with offspring.

23. Then, the queen draws three lines upon the horse's stomach with golden needles, the Vavatha with silver ones and the Parivritti with those made of iron. *Ib.* 152, 153, 154, 160.

24. The sacrificial horse is to be cut with golden knives, while iron ones should be used in the case of the other animals.

25. A blanket smeared with clarified butter is covered with a rug of fur; a bed adorned with gold is spread upon it; a golden plank is placed on the top; and the sacrificial horse is made to lie down upon it before he is put to death.

26. It has no vapa (omentum), but a lump of flesh by name Chandra takes its place; and is offered in the fire—*Ib.* 186, 190.

27. At the close of the Aswamedha the sacrificer goes back to his abode and performs twelve Brahmaudanas.

28. The Mahishi (queen) is she who is crowned and anointed along with the king. Vavatha is the woman whom he has taken into his bed out of love; she who occupied that place before her is known as Parivrithi ; while the daughter of a messenger is titled Palakali. *Ibid.* XII.

Rig-veda I. 162, 163 deal with the sacrificial horse in the Aswamedha. Its thirty-four ribs symbolise the twenty-seven stars and the seven planets.

Brihad-aranyakopanishad gives the following symbolic interpretation of the sacrificial horse.

“Oh ! The dawn in truth is the head of the sacrificial horse. The sun is the eye ; the wind the breath ; the fire under the name Vaiswanara, the open mouth ; the year the body of the sacrificial horse. The heaven is the back ; the atmosphere the belly ; the earth the footstool (hoof) ; the quarters the sides ; the intermediate quarters the bones of the sides ; the seasons the members ; the months, and the half-months, are the joints ; day and night the feet ; the constellations the bones ; the sky the muscles ; the half-digested food the sand ; the rivers the arteries and veins ; the liver and spleen the mountains ; the herbs and trees the various kinds of hair.

The sun as long as he rises, is the fore part of his body ; the sun as long as he descends, is the hind part of the body. The lightning is like yawning ; the shaking of the members is like the roaring of the thunder ; the passing of urine is like the rain of the clouds ; its voice is like speech.

2. The day is the Mahima placed before the horse ; its birth-place is the eastern sea ; the night is the other Mahima which is placed behind the horse ; its birth place is the western sea ; these Mahimas are placed around the horse. The horse under the name of Haya carried the Gods ; under the name of Vajee, the Gandharvas ; under the name of Arwa, the Asuras ; under the name of Aswa, the men. The sea is its companion, the sea its birth-place. [On this Sankara comments as follows :—]

Introduction.

The knowledge of the ceremonies regarding the sacrifice of the horse is required by those who are not fit to perform it, that they may obtain by this knowledge the same reward. The Aswamedha, with a description of which this Upanishad opens, does not properly belong to it. Kings alone are entitled to perform it ; but the Brahmanas and others may obtain by knowledge the reward of the sacrifice.

*Q.—*The Vedic texts “ By knowledge or by holy actions the mentioned reward may be obtained ” and “ He who overcomes even this world ” teach us that knowledge is but a kind of work.

A.—No. Such passages as “ Who offers the sacrificial horse ” and “ Who knows him thus ” (who knows the sacrifice of the horse to be an emblem of Prajapathi) leave it optional to perform that sacrifice either by knowledge or in reality. Again, this knowledge is also mentioned in the second part of the Sruthi which treats upon knowledge.

Further, a similar representation is made by other ceremonies also. Hence, it follows that from knowledge alone is derived the reward of the horse-sacrifice. The chief of all ceremonies however is the Aswamedha, because its reward includes the universal and the special state of the Prajapathi. (The universal state is Hiranyagarbha as the Soul of the Universe or the Iswara who rules all ; the special state is Hiranyagarbha as present in every individual. Here the special state means the state of a special divinity).....

The sacrifice is represented under the emblem of a horse on account of the eminence of the horse, which again is derived from the sacrifice bearing its name and from its being the representation of Prajapathi.

Commentary on the text.

The *dawn* means here the hour of Brahma.

Is the head, from its being the principal time ; for the head is the principal part of the body. To purify the animal representing in its members the various parts of the ceremonies, time and the other conditions of the sacrifice are typified by the head and the other parts. It is represented as Prajapathi by giving it the emblems of Prajapathi ; for, the representation of the animal by time, the worlds and the divinities are their representation as Prajapathi; for, this is the nature of Prajapathi, as Vishnu and other deities are represented under the form of an image.

The sun is the eye, as nearest to the head and as being the tutelary deity of the eye, (as the eye is nearest to the head, so the sun is nearest to the dawn. This is the point of their assemblance—*Anandagiri*).

The wind is the breath, from its identity with it. *The mouth is fire*, under the name of *Vaiswanara*; *Vaiswanara*

is the special name of Agni, meaning "he whose mouth is wide open". Agni is also the deity of the mouth.

The year is the body, the year which contains twelve or thirteen months. The year is the body of the members of time, for, the body is in the midst of the members as the Sruthi says.

The heaven is the back, both being placed alike above.

The atmosphere the belly, both being hollow. The quarters, although four, are the two sides by the similarity of both. This comparison is not improper for the reason that the number of both is different ; for, as the two sides of the horse are turned to all quarters, there is no fault in it.

The seasons are the members, from the similarity of the parts of the year with the members of the body.

Days and nights the feet. The plural is here used to denote the difference of days, as days of Prajapathi, of the Devas, of the Pithris and of men. *Feet*, because the body of time proceeds with the days and the nights.

The constellations resemble the bones in being white.

The sky meaning here the clouds of the sky, are the muscles ; because water or blood oozes out from them.

The half-digested food is the sand, because the separate parts are similar.

The rivers are the arteries and veins, because both ooze out.

The liver and the spleen are the mountains—Two pieces of flesh to the right and to the left of the heart, so called from their hardness and height. The herbs and the small plants are the hair on the body; the trees are the hair on the head, owing to their likeness.

The sun rising until noon is the forepart of the horse above the navel ; the sun descending from the midst of his

course is the other half. The hips and loins form their respective similarity.

The lighting is like the yawning. The mouth when it suddenly opens is like the rending of a cloud.

The shaking of the members produces a sound like the rolling of thunder.

The passing of the urine is like the rain of the clouds, since both sprinkle.

The voice is like the neighing of the horse. Here the likeness is natural.

The day etc. This is said in illustration of the gold and the silver cups called Mahima which are placed before and behind the horse. The day is the golden cup, from the similar splendour of both. It is placed before the horse, by being an emblem of Prajapathi ; for Prajapathi, who is represented by the sun etc, is denoted also by the day. In naming the horse, Prajapathi is meant, as the lightning is manifest by manifesting a tree. The birth-place of the golden cup means here the place where it is kept. Thus, the night represents the silver cup, from the likeness of the colour or of the hind part of the horse. Behind the horse the cup by name Mahima is placed. Its birth palce is the western sea. Mahima means greatness, for it shows the opulence of the horse, that the golden and silver cups are placed on either side. These cups under the name of Mahima are placed around the horse. The repetition is for the sake of praise--the Mahimas which have those distinctions and the horse gifted with greatness. The same praise is intended by the words *the horse under the name of Haya*. Haya is derived from the root *Hinothi* the action of going, going in an eminent manner, unless it means a peculiar race. When it is said to carry the Gods, it is said to have been the condition of a God by, its being the representation of Prajapathi. The office of carrying is no blame to it, be-

cause it is its nature ; it thereby acquires an eminence as being connected with Gods and other superior beings. In the same manner the words Vaji, Arwa, etc. denote different races. The sea, which stands for the universal soul, is its companion, for, there is its dwelling place. The sea is its birth-place as the cause of its production. "In the waters is the birth place of the horse" says the Sruthi.

N.B.—"The Aswamedha and the Purushamedha (man-sacrifice), celebrated in the manner directed by this Veda (Suklayajur-veda) are not really sacrifices of horses and men. In the first, 609 animals of various prescribed kinds, domestic and wild, including birds, fish and reptiles are made fast, the tame ones to 21 posts and the wild ones in the intervals between the pillars ; and after certain prayers have been recited, the victims are let loose without injury. This mode of performing the Aswamedha and Purushamedha as emblematic ceremonies and not as real sacrifices, is taught in this Veda and the interpretation is confirmed by the rituals and by the commentators on the Samhitha and the Brahmana. The horse, which is the subject of the religious ceremony called Aswamedha, is also avowedly an emblem of Viraj or the primeval and universal manifested being"—*Colebrooke's Miscellaneous Essays*. Vol. I, 61, 62. [For fuller details consult Kathayayana-srautha soothra, the Satha-patha-brahmana, the Thaithireeya-brahmana, etc.]

51. *Kasi* :—The descendants of Kshathra-vridda, who came of the line of Ayus, the eldest son of Purooravas, held sway over the kingdom. From Saunaka, one of them, came into existence the four castes. Dhanvanthri, the son of Deerghathamas, arose from the ocean when it was churned for Amritha. Every one of his births found him omniscient and free from the ills and griefs that beset man. Through a boon conferred upon him by the Lord Narayana

in a previous birth, he was born in the line of the kings of Kasi. He revived among men the knowledge of the Science of Healing and composed many a work on it. In common with the Devas, he is entitled to a share in the sacrificial offerings. Prathardana was a king of this race—even he who learnt the Science of Brahman from Indra (Kausheethakee Upanishad III. I ; Brahma-soothras I. 29.) Alarka, another of its kings, lived for 66,000 years through the grace of Lopamudra, the wife of Agasthya. It is he who immortalised himself by giving his eyes to a blind Brahmana ; (this is to be understood in a symbolical sense, that the Brahmana was taught divine wisdom by the king and had his eye of spirit opened.) *V. P. IV. 8*

Kekaya. “ There cannot be any doubt that Girivraja—the capital of the Kekayas—lay beyond the Jhelum on this side of the Indus. The word means ‘collection of hills’ and the town must be looked for somewhere in the Salt Range, which runs from the Jhelum to the Indus and beyond it. If a line were drawn, say from Jalalpur at the base of this range to Ayodhya on the Sarayu, it will be seen that Valmeeki’s description is exceedingly accurate and the old towns of Hasthinapura and Ahistala will pretty nearly lie on it. Near this place (Jalalpur), there is an old fort called Girjhak, which has the same meaning as Girivraja, said to have been founded by Raja Bharata, who is so much associated with Girivraja, and showing unmistakable antiquity by yielding coins reaching back to the times of Alexander’s successors. I have therefore no hesitation in identifying it with our Girivraja.

“ The question remains ‘who were the Kekayas?’ The Greeks do not mention any such name, but speak of a people called Kathaei, whom they place to the east of the Chenaub and describe in terms analogous to the Sauviras. I have already shown that the Greek ac-

count of the present of a tiger-like dog by Sophistes harmonizes with our poet's description of the ferocious dogs of the king of the Kekayas. Strabo says they were a handsome race and we know from the Ramayana that the king of Ayodhya was exceedingly partial to his Kekaya wife. The modern Kattis of Kathiyar are tall and robust with fair complexion and are said to have emigrated to their present abode from the banks of the Indus. I am therefore strongly inclined to believe that they are the Kekayas of Sanskrit Literature. In the Mahabharatha, if I remember right, the Kekayas are never mentioned with the Saindhavas. In the Vishnupurana (IV. 14. 10), one of Krishna's aunts is said to have married a Kekaya king and in the Udyogaparva, the Kekayas are said to have fought with the Vrishnis on the side of Yudhishtira (15. 32). Can it not be that Krishna's migration to Dwarka in Kattyar from Mathura, on the Jumna was owing to a grant from the Kekya ruler of Kathiyar?"—*Geography of Ancient India.*

33. *Sindhu-desa*.—“I have already stated that Sindhu desa meant the country of the upper Indus. This is clear from the writings of Kalidasa. We read in the Raghuvamsa that Rama made over this country to this brother Bharatha according to the instructions of his uncle Yudhajit and Bharatha conquered the Gandharvas and placed his sons Thaksha and Pushkala in charge of towns named after them—Takshasilā and Pushkalavāthi (*Raghuvamsa* XV. 87. 88). Both of these places are famous in Indian history—Pushkalavathi or Pushkaravathi in the form Peukelaotis or Peucolaitis and its shortened form Pushkala or Pushkara in the form Peukelas were known to Greek writers. It was the capital of Gandhara in the days of Alexander and Arrian in his *Indica* places it not far from the river Indus. It was visited by the celebrated Chinese pilgrim. Hiuen Thsang in Nov. 630, who came to Pu-ṣe-kia-lo-fa-ti after crossing a great

river and travelling 100 *li.* to the north-east of Pu-lu-sha polo (or Peshawar). General Cunningham in his Ancient Geography of India, page 50, comes to the conclusion on grounds described in his work, that it must have stood at Hastinagar on the Suat river. I would however place it to the north-east of Hastnagar about Bashkala given in some of the maps not only because it agrees in name, but also because Hindu writers place it on the Himalaya. The 37th Tharanga of the *Katha sarithasagara* describes the journey of a merchant of Ujjaini or Qjeen to this town, who travels northward and passes several rivers and forests ; then comes to the country inhabited chiefly by Mlechhas specified as Tajiks and Turkomen ; then crosses the river Vitasta (Behut) and goes into a hilly forest (evidently about the Salt Range) ; then arrives at Pushkaravati, which is thrice said to be on a summit of the Himalaya Range. The special mention of Tajiks shows that the writer was fully acquainted with this part of India and makes me reluctant to reject his testimony.

" The 27th Tharanga of the same describes the position of Takshasila and its former grandeur. It says 'there was a town named Takshasila on the banks of the Vitasta in whose waters were reflected the images of its edifices. It had a devoted Buddhist King named Kalingadatta and an entirely Buddhist population rich by the blessings of Tara. The town shone with his uninterrupted rich *stupas* as if with summits of vanity, that there was no place like it.' The Greek and Chinese accounts, however, make a more inland town at considerable distance from the Vitasta and I am, therefore, inclined to think that Vitasta is a misprint for Sudama or Suan river. General Cunningham (p. 119) identifies it with Shah-dheri and probably he is not far from truth,

"The description of Kalidasa is, in fact based on an older work—the Uttharakanda, which is interesting not only because giving full particulars, but also because distinctly laying down the country of the Gandharvas on both sides of the Indus and identifying western Gandharvas with the Gandharas of later literature—the Gandarae of Ptolemy, traces of which name may probably be still found in the Gundar-bar of the Punjab and the Gandgarh mountain to the north of it. I reproduce the material passages below, as they also give some description of the towns Takshasila and Pushkalavata. A slight allusion to this conquest of Gandharvas is also found in the *V. P. IV.* 66.

"The identity of Gandharva and Sindhu desa may be also seen from other considerations. It has been always famous for an excellent breed of horses. Among the presents to Bharata by the king of Kekayas, was a thousand of fire-footed horses of his country. (*V. R. II*, 72, 33). Among the valuable presents to Yudhishtira in the great Rajasooya festival, were several horses of Gandhara. (*M. B. Sabhaparva*, 51, 10). Hence in the *Amarakosa*, (II. 8, 44) we find both Saindhava and Gandharva as synonyms of horses.

"The Saindhava salt mentioned in the same book evidently refers to the rock-salt found in the Salt Range of mountains ; for it does not refer to sea-salt, as it is separately mentioned as *Samudra* Salt ; Manimantha is given as another synonym for *Saindhava* salt ; and the commentator Maheswara explains that it means 'produced in the mountain Manimantha' (which can only refer to the Salt Range). But the most convincing proof is a passage of the *Raghuvamsa* (V. 73) and that Saindhava is still understood by all salt-sellers of India as rock-salt. I have, therefore, no hesitation in identifying Manimantha with the Salt Range and in asserting that it stands within the old Sindhu desa. The Greeks call this range Oromenus, which is certainly not

connected with Raumaka as General Cunningham seems to think (p. 158). All Hindu authorities agree that Raumaka is the Sambar salt and Ruma is the salt mine (lake) of Sambher. *Hemachandra*, IV. 7.

"In the *M.B.*, I. 88. Gandhara is seperately mentioned with its chief Subala, whose daughter Gandhari was married to Dhritharashtra, and Jayadratha figures as the head of Sindhu Sauveeras. There can therefore be no doubt that Sindhu in later literature, meant what Arrian understood by it—the country to the East of the Upper Indus or the province of Takshasila. There are other considerations corroborative of this inference. Jayadratha is said to belong to the same family of Ikshwakus to which Bharatha belonged (*M.B. Vanaparva* 265) and the train of princes that followed him to Salvas belonged to the land of Sauveeras (*Ib.* 265, 266)—Sivis—Pulindas and Trigartas, who, as will be shown hereafter, were all bordering tribes."—*Geography of Ancient India*.

Sauveera—"From a passage of the Adiparva (137) they were a branch of the Gandharvas. Their land has given name to several things. First of all, Sauveera is the name of a drink which Amara in his II. 9,39, identifies with *Kanji*, but which Bhavamisra describes separately (Part II, Sandhana Varga). Then, it is the name of a sulphide of antimony or lead used as a collyrium. (II. 9. 100). Lastly, it is a name of the Jujube fruit (II. 4. 36-37). In the *M.B.* Saindhavas and Sauveeras are promiscuously mentioned and as its Saindhavas meant the people to the east of the Indus and north of the Salt Range, the Sauveeras must have peopled the tract south of the Salt Range between the Indus and the Jhelum. I believe Sophistes of Alexander's historians was by common custom so called from the name of the Sauveeras he governed. At all events, the locality is the same and the story of the presentation of lion-fighting

dog receives confirmation in the Ramayana, according to which many tiger-like dogs were presented to Bharatha by the king of the Kekayas (II. 72). Hemachandra calls Sauveeras Kumalakas (IV. 26). Has the river Gomal which flows by Dera Ismail Khan any connection with this name? In illustrating Panini's Soothra IV. 2,76, Vamana mentions of a town called Dattamitri in Sauveera. But, my knowledge is too limited to enable me to identify it with any modern place."—*Geography of Ancient India*.

Saurashtra.—"The peninsula of Kattywar was known as Anarta or Surashtra. (Harivamsa 5168). Hence Dwaraka is called in the *M. B.* Udyoga-para VII). Anartanagari or capital of Anarta.

It was also called Vrishnipura from the family of Vrishnis, to which Krishna belonged (Vana-parva. 183). Purushoththama gives as its synonym Dvaravathi, Vanamalini and Abdhinagari or sea-town Trikanda-sesha). It must not be confounded with modern Dwaraka. The old Dwaraka was swept away by the sea. (Vishnu Purana V. 38). According to local tradition, it stood near Madhupura, 95 miles S. E. of Dwaraka. According to Sanskrit writers, Dwaraka stood near mount Raivathaka called also Ujjayantha (Hemachandra IV. 97). This Ujjayantha, from inscriptions and tradition, appears to be the Girinar hill near Junagarh. The local tradition about Dwaraka is therefore correct, as Madhupura is near the Girinar hill. This Madhupura appears to be the Madhupura mentioned in the Harivamsa—the old capital of Anartha and probably derives its name from the Madhus, who appear to have been a tribe that inhabited the peninsula (Bhagavatha I. 11).

"Balabhi appears to have been the next capital of the province (Dasa-kumaracharitra, VI). It seems to derive its name from Krishna's brother Balabhadra, as Baladeva Pattana occurs in the *Varahi Samhita* XIV. 16. Col. Tod

discovered its ruins at Balbi, 10 miles N. W. of Bhowanagar, In some of the inscriptions, kings of Balabhi are styled Lateswara, from which I gather that Lata was a dependency of Surashtra. This may be also gathered from the passage quoted from the Kumara-charita, as I identify Khetakapura with modern Kaira.

" Among other places, I must not omit Prabhosa, the celebrated place of pilgrimage. From *M. B. Vanaparva*, 88, it is clear that it was in Surashtra and stood on the sea-coast. In the *Gada-Parva*, a legend is given explaining the name that Soma (the moon) got rid of his consumption by bathing at Prabhosa. I quote this legend to show its possible connection with Somanatha-pattana, which is also a seaside town in the S. W. of Surashtra and a great place of pilgrimage. Here the Yadavas are said to have killed one another in a drinking carousal.—*Geography of Ancient India*.

53. 34. *Culinary art*.—Treats of the origin of eatable objects, their qualities, properties, defects, taste, etc., and about the various methods of preparing them. Nala, the ruler of Ayodhya and Bheema, one of the Pandavas were the highest exponents of the art.

54. 13. *Discussions* :—*Kausika-srautha-soothra XXXVIII.* 17 (Darila's commentary), tells us that the following manthra (*Atharva Veda* I. 34) was intended to win victories in polemical discussions during the Aswamedha rite. The intending winner should approach the assembly from the N. W. chewing the leaf or the flower or the berry or the fruit or the root of the Madhooka tree ; while he should recite mentally the following verses :—

1. "This Oshadi (medicinal herb of occult properties) was born along with madhu (honey). We dig you up with madhu. You arise from madhu. Make us obtain the madhu."

2. " May madhu spring from the root and the tip of my tongue. You shall act up to my orders entirely."

3. " May my entering the assembly be sweet (madhura). May my going out of the assembly be sweet. May every word that I speak fall sweetly on the ears of the listeners. May I appear sweet to those that look upon me. I am sweeter than madhu. I am sweeter than the tree from which the madhu springs. You shall be charmed by me even as your heart is drawn towards the branch dropping honey."

17. *Uma*. The consort of Mahadeva.

21. *Chandrayana*. A religious observance or expiatory penance regulated by the moon's age. (It consists in diminishing the daily consumption of food every day by one mouthful for the dark half of the month beginning with 15 at the full moon, until the quantity is reduced to zero at the new moon, and then increasing it in like manner during the fortnight of the moon's increase ; if this penance begins with the full moon, it is called Pipeelika-madhyha, *i. e.* having the middle thin like an ant ; if with the new moon beginning with zero and increasing to 15, it is called Yava-madhyha or Yava-madhyama *i. e.* having the middle thick like a barley-corn).

38. *The Great Bear* :—Mareechi, Vasishtha, Angiras Athri, Pulasthya, Pulaha and Krathu are the Rishis that preside over it. They appear in the sky thus :—

6	5		x
x	x		1
x	x	x	x
7	4	3	2

(*Bh. XII. 2*).

56. 5. The Prajapathi gave out the Aswamedha to the world.—*Sruthi*.

57. 1. Dasaratha performed the horse-sacrifice that burnt away all sins that might stand between him and progeny ; Brahma and the other Devas who form as it were the members of the Kosmic Person were pleased thereby.

He next remembered that Sumanthra had advised him to conduct a rite to ensure him a son and thereby worship the Lord, the Giver of all. Hence, his prayer to Rishyasringa.

58. 1. The Lord incarnated as man to protect the righteous ; and Dasaratha's prayers formed but the visible cause thereto. The devas took advantage of the occasion to appeal to his mercy and protection against the fierce and pitiless Rakshasas.

8. *Atharvana manthras* :—Food is cooked in eight pot-sherds made of eight different earths ; and it is offered to father Agni with the manthra—*Yasyaithwam sukriithe jathavedo lokam agne krinavasyonam. Asinam saputhrinam veeravantham gomantham rayim nachethi swasthi.* *Dattaka-meemamsa* quotes the Thaitthireeya Samhitha, Kanda II, Prapathaka ii, Anuvaka 4, where the Puthreshhti is described thus :

He who desires an offspring should offer a Purodasa to Agni in eight pot-sherds and to Indra in eleven. Agni gives offspring to the sacrificer ; Indra increases them.

Kausika Kalpa-soothra XXXV. 3. directs that the following manthra (*Atharvaveda* II. 23) should be used to secure the birth of a son :—

1. “We remove the causes from you that have made you childless. We have placed them far from you.

2. “ May a son enter your womb even as the arrow comes back into the quiver. May a warrior be born of you ten months hence.

3. “ Bring forth a son. May another be born after him. May they beget offspring.

4. “ May you give birth to a son even as bulls bring forth calves of cows. May you be the mother of many, even as a cow who is the mother of many calves.

5. " I perform this Ishti to Prajapathi for your benefit. May a son find his way to your womb. Be blessed with a son. All good be thine. You shall be the source of good even unto him who is born of you.

6. " May those Oshadhis (occult herbs) bless you with a son, even they whose father is the Akasa, whose mother is the earth and whose birth place is the ocean.

Kausika Kalpasoothra XXXV 8 informs us that the following Manthra (*Atharva-veda VI 2*) is to be used to secure the birth of a male offspring. An Arani should be made of the Aswattha and the Sami wood ; and the woman who desires a son to be born to her should be purified variously with the fire generated therefrom.

1. " The Aswatha is upon the Sami. A son is about to be generated. We mean to secure to this woman the bliss of begetting a son.

2. The vital energy that springs in the man finds its way into the woman. It is even what is known as the begetting of a son. Prajapathi says that it is so.

3. Prajapathi, Anumathi and Sineevali brought into existence the foetus. May they put away barrenness from this woman and place a son in her womb."

Kausika Kalpasoothra XXXV. 17 directs that the following manthra (*Atharva-veda VII. 19*) should be recited, when the offering is made into the lap of the woman during the Puthreshhti.

" Prajapathi creates these creatures. Dhatha gave them unanimity and oneness of thought. May the Devatha that confers all good give unto me what is good."

14. *Approached* :—The Adhyatma Ramayana II and Raghuvamsa X. 6 narrate how the goddess of earth was unable to bear the iniquities of Ravana and his Rakshasas ; and sought the protection of Brahma in the shape of a cow.

He took her and the Devas to where Mahavishnu reclined in his yogic sleep on Adisesha in the Ocean of milk and poured forth into him their tale of woe and suffering.

15. *Ravana* :—For a detailed account of his birth, antecedents, boons, conquests etc., *vide V. R. III. 32,47,48,49 ; VII 2-35.*

59. 17. *The Conch* :—The Kausthubha gem that shines upon his breast is but the Knowledge of Self purified of all taint of Prakriti and its three gunas. The mole Sreevathsa that graces his broad breast is Pradhana, otherwise known as Prakriti. The principle of Buddhi is his man ; the five elements are the conch ; the senses are his bow, Saranga so called ; the mind is his chakra, by name Sudarsana. The rudiments of the five elements (Thanamantras) are the gems that shine resplendent in Vaijayanthi, the garland around his neck. The knowledge of Brahman hidden at times within the scabbard of Agnana (nescience) is Nandaka, his sword. So Purusha, Prakriti, Buddhi, Ahankara, the five elements, the senses, the Manas, knowledge, ignorance and the rest manifest themselves in his form as weapons and graces and watch over the welfare of the universe.—*V. P. I. 22.*

28. *Hree*.—Sree and Keerthi were the three daughters of Daksha, the Patriarch.

“ The Goddesses Hree and Lakshmi are your consorts ”—*Purusha-sooktha.*

38. *Only stay* :—“ Why do you prefer your appeal to me when there is Brahma and Rudra who would do as well ? ”

“ Nay, Lord, but Ravana has tied their hands by having made them grant many mighty boons, securing to him length of years past count, and immeasurable might.”

60. 2. *Ravana*.—was killed by Rama, Indrajith by Lakshmana, the wicked Gandharvas by Bharatha and Lavana by Sathrughna.

13. *Promised* :—The Lord of the Angels, though the fountain of wisdom and the soul of compassion, desires that his children, the individual selves, should call upon him to protect them. That was why he waited for the Devas to take refuge in him before he pledged himself to their deliverance.

23. *The Rudras* :—The Lord of Kailasa accompanied Brahma and the Devas on their momentous errand.

61. 5. *Most effective method* :—“ You wanted me to take birth of Dasaratha. Well ; is it in my divine capacity of Upendra or as a man among men ? ” asks the Lord, to honour those that sought his help.

31. *Presence* :—The Lord himself came out of the sacrificial fire, with the Payasa permeated by his divine thejas. For, who else was there to bear it?—*Thilaka*. But, *Adh R. III* and *A. R. I.* tell us that the Lord of Fire brought the Payasa to Dasaratha.

63. 5. *Equally* :—Kausalya and Kaikeyee spared a portion of their share to Sumithra, their hand-maiden—*Bhattikavya*; *Adh. R. III*.

Once upon a time, the Apsaras Suvarchala was dancing before Brahma, when she chanced to make a slip out of sheer carelessness. Brahma took it upon himself to pronounce the karma that was waiting for her to take up and cursed her to be born a vulture. She fell at his feet and sobbed out an appeal for mercy. “ Nay, nay, there is no recalling my words. But, rejoice to know that the curse will sit upon you only until the time when the Lord shall go down to the dark earth as Sree Rama to protect his children. King Dasaratha, his father, will distribute the divine Payasa to his wives. You will snatch Kaikeyee’s portion from her

hands ere she tastes it and fling it down on mount Anjana. Your curse will fall away from you and you will take your place among us once more."

Everything fell out as he predicted; and Kausalya and Sumithra kindly spared some of their portion of the Payasa to Kaikeyee. Meanwhile, that which was flung on Mount Anjana by the vulture fell into the hollowed palms of Anjana, a she monkey, who was performing dread thapas there, all to be blessed with a fair son. She partook of it and Hanuman was born in consequence. Bharatha and Sathrughna were born respectively from the portion taken from those of Kausalya and Sumithra.—A. R. I I.

9. *Period of pregnancy* :—Vasishtha enjoined Dasaratha to satisfy the desires of their hearts. "For," said he "they will pine away if denied what their hearts are fixed upon; and that naturally reacts upon the babe within. But, if the period passes in calm content, with no desire unfulfilled, they will give birth to sons gifted with length of years." That very night, Dasaratha sought the apartments of Kaikeyee, the idol of his heart, and said "My heart will know no peace until I have satisfied your most cherished yearning." And to him, the slave of passion, spoke Kaikeyee, "Lord of Ayodhya ! I crave nothing more than to see the son born of my loins on the throne of Kosala, and Kausalya's brat exiled far far away in the dark forests." The king next repaired to the palace of Sumithra and put to her the same question. "Lord of my life" was her reply "nothing would content me but to see my son wait upon the prince to whom the happy Kausalya will give birth; and be it his privilege to carry out the behests of the future ruler of men. My reverence and love to Kausalya shall broaden out even as the mighty Ganga. And, last but not the least, may I continue to find favour in your eyes even to the very end."

Dasaratha next took himself to the presence of Kausalya and offered her the same choice. But, she checked him with mild caution. "Lord ! All my thoughts are bound up in the desire that the child in my womb should come out of it safe and reign over his subjects for unnumbered years. Have you forgotten how we escaped from the very jaws of death even on the day of our marriage, when the dread Ravana sought our destruction?" No sooner was the name of Ravana uttered by Kausalya, than the babe in the womb cried out in fury, "Lakshmana ! Bring me my bow and shafts this very instant. I will rid the earth of that monster and place Vibheeshana on the throne. Look to it that a bridge is thrown across the sea where the Rakshasa lives. My friends the monkeys are bound to be there in no time." Kausalya fainted away with sheer fright. Dasaratha sent for Vasishtha in hot haste to lay the evil spirit that, as he believed, afflicted her sore. But, the wise one heard him with patience, laid his head on the ground in lowly obeisance to the Lord of the Universe that abode in the womb of the thrice-blessed Kausalya.

64. 1. The birth and exploits of the famous monkey chiefs mentioned in this chapter find a more detailed treatment in Kandas IV, V, VI and VII.

65. 31. *Rikshawan* :—The modern Satpuras, between the rivers Narmada and Tapti—*M. B. Vanaparva*, 61-21.

V. P. II. iii, 11 tells us that the rivers Payoshini, Thapi, and Nirvindhya take their rise in it. Thapi or Thapani or Thapanathmaja, was called in later times Tapti. Payoshini is now known as Poorna and falls into the Tapti.

M. B. Vanaparva 40 ; 120. 31; 121. 16; locates the Vidharbha-desa south of the Narmada. This river is considered to have a peculiar sanctity (*Ib.* 88. 9). Nirvindhya is the river referred to in *Kalidasa's Meghadoota* I. 29.

Mallinatha, the commentator, describes it as rising in the Vindhyaas and taking a northerly course east of Ujjain. It might be that it is the modern Parvathi that we find there. Some Puranas describe it as having its source in the Vindhyaas ; so, it might be by a slip that it is described as having its origin in the Rikshawan mountains.

15. The curse of Parvathi (V. R. I. 36) prevented the Devas from begetting offspring upon their legitimate wives. Hence, the origin of the monkey hosts from Gandharvas, Vidhyadharas and Apsaraas. Besides, the curse of Nandikeswara (V. R. 5) made the Devas take monkey forms.

Q :—But then, how could it be said that Vali came down upon earth to render help to Sree Rama in his great work ?

A :—His son Angada served Rama long and well. Nay, but for Vali's quarrel with Sugreeva, Rama would not have come into contact with the latter. Vali was the foe of Sugreeva ; and Rama had to help him and in return receive help from his monkey hosts. If Rama had sought the friendship of Vali, he would have restored Seetha to him in no time, for Ravana was in mortal terror of Vali. But, that was not what Sree Rama came down for. Ravana and his hosts would not have been wiped off the face of the earth. All the Devas created sons out of their essence, all except Mahadeva, who, as Ravana's Ishta-devatha (tutelary deity) would have no hand in his downfall.

D :—The Devas came to Dasaratha's hall of sacrifice after Rishyasringa began his Puthreshti. The Lord's appearance among them and the coming down of the Gods on earth are described as subsequent events. But, we are told that Vali and Sugreeva were mighty kings when Ravana was on his tour of conquest ; Mainda and Dwivida were present at the churning of the ocean. Krodhana fought for the

Devas against the Asuras. Then, how are the above facts to be reconciled with the statement of their having been born only a short time before the Lord came down as Sree Rama?

A :—The commands of Brahma—“ Bring forth mighty sons out of your essence ”—was of a general nature. But, the poem narrates the birth of Vali and Sugreeva even as it describes the origin of Jambavan in the far past, even at the very beginning of this kalpa. It is not to be understood that all the monkey-chiefs mentioned in the chapter were begotten simultaneously. Only such of the Gods carried out the behests of Brahma as had not done it before.

67. 23. *Chose to take human form* :—Ambareesha, king of Ayodhya, had a lovely daughter by name Sreemathi. Narada, the Devarshi and Parvatha his nephew, one day chanced to pay a visit to him. Narada noticed Sreemathi, who stood by her father's side and said, “ Ambareesha ! Who is this child ? There is very little of this universe that I have not visited time and oft, but, believe me when I say that this spot holds the loveliest form that Brahma ever fashioned.” To which Ambareesha replied with a joyful heart and reverently clasped hands, “ Holy one ! She calls me her father ; and the world knows her as Sreemathi. She is about to take upon herself the duties of a wife, if she could get a husband after her own heart.” Meanwhile Parvatha, the younger of the two, was no less smitten with the beauty of the princess ; but he offered silent homage at the shrine of love. The same thought flashed across the minds of both—to ask Sreemathi of her father in marriage. Just before they took leave of the king, Narada took him apart and said to him earnestly, “ I request a mighty favour from you—even the hand of your charming daughter in marriage.” But, Ambareesha replied, “ You cannot honour me more than by deigning

to bless my daughter thus. But, I have no heart to fetter her choice, and she will, as I sincerely hope and pray, give you her heart and her hand. Parvatha waited till Narada had taken his leave of Ambareesha and started on his journey, to make to him the same proposals as his uncle did. Ambareesha gave him a similar reply and added, "But, your uncle too would have me give her in marriage to him. Equally dear to me are both of you and worthy of reverence. And it were best that I left the solution of this enigma to the dictates of my girl's heart." Parvatha promised to come back the next day and his uncle with him.

Strange indeed was it to see Narada and Parvatha caught in the toils of earthly love, albeit they were high on the path of perfection and were dear to the Lord. But, stranger still are the ways of Karma and more mysterious. Narada went to Vaikuntha, saluted the Dweller thereof and related to Him his visit to Ambareesha, his unaccountable passion for the princess and prayed, "Lord ! I would crave of you a favour. Parvatha would be here to-morrow. I pray that you give him a hideous baboon-face. But, Sreemathi alone should see him so, and flee from him in horror and loathing. Then, I will have the field clear and fear no rivals." "Be it so" replied Govinda with a smile and Narada hied back to Ayodhya on the wings of joy. Later on, Parvatha sought the persence of the Lord and confided to him the secret of his heart and prayed "Lord ! I seek no greater favour at your hands than to make the face of Narada as repulsive as that of a gorilla. Sreemathi would go into fits at the sight of him, and prefer me as her husband." "May your heart's desire be fulfilled" replied the Lord. "Narada is even now on his way to Ayodhya. Manage to be there in time. Let not Narada know of your visit to me."

King Ambareesha was duly informed of the visit of the

holy sages ; he caused his capital to the gaily attired, and received Narada and Parvatha with divine honors. Then, Sreemathi was sent for ; she came to the hall of audience, breaking upon their vision like some sweet dream of beauty. Ambareesha called her to his side and said " Darling of my heart ! Here are Narada, the divine sage and Parvatha, his nephew, to seek your hand in holy wedlock. I leave it to you to choose one of them and throw the garland in your hands around the shoulders of the fortunate one. Sreemathi approached the sages, looked long and earnestly at them and stood as it purified. " Why, my child ! Art struck dumb with their radiant lustre engendered of unparalleled thapas ? " " Nay, father ! " replied Sreemathi, as if roused from a horrible dream, " Narada and Parvatha, the holy ones—where are they ? I see them not ; but there stand before me two men one with the face of a baboon and the other with the features of a gorilla. My heart is turned into water at the frightful sight. But, the resplendent Form between them attracts unto itself my life, my soul, my very being. He looks no older than a youth of sixteen, fair as the rain-charged clouds lighted by the fires of heaven, adorned with every grace of nature and device of art, his massive arms well-shaped reaching down to his knees, his broad eyes of rosy hue even as the petals of the full-blown lotus, he beckons to me with his right hand to come and take my place by his side." *Narada.* (with a shade of suspicion) " Just tell me how many hands he has." *Sreemathi,* " Two." *Parvatha,* " Do you notice any thing peculiar on his breast ? Has he any thing in his hands ? " S. " A resplendent garland adorns his broad breast ; and a mighty bow and arrows are his only weapons." Then, the sages were at a loss to make out who the unwelcome rival was. " Whose witchery is this ? None but Janardana, the master of illusion,

dare come between us and the object of our desire. It is he and no other. Else, why should our features appear to the lovely princess hideous beyond description ? They were lost in dejected thought, when Ambareesha turned to them and said. " This deep reverie betokens not the eagerness and anxiety of a lover. If you have a mind to make my daughter your wife, why not go about it, the right way and the straight ? " They flared up at this accusation of unfair dealing and cried out, " Crookedness of ways and double-dealing is yours to command ; we have neither art nor part in it. We are quite willing that your daughter should choose one of us for her husband, and small blame to us if she doesn't see her way to it." Ambareesha was non-plussed ; he ordered Sreemathi, a trifle too severely than was necessary, to choose one of the two as her husband. Poor girl ! She bowed herself in thought to the deity of her heart and in mortal dread of the terrible curse of the Rishis, took up the garland and raised her eyes with fear and trembling to the faces of her unwelcome suitors. She found them more repulsive than ever ; and impelled to it by some unaccountable force within herself, she threw the garland around the shoulders of the glorious Presence that sat between them. Right away she disappeared from the ken of men ; and the vast concourse of people raised a shout of wonder and apprehension at it. Births out of count had she passed through in earnest prayer and thapas to be blessed with Lord Vishnu as her husband. She was born as Sreemathi and had her desires accomplished.

Meanwhile, Parvatha and Narada took their way to Vaikuntha in deep dejection of heart, dashed with a shade of suspicion in it. The Lord saw them approach and directed Sreemathi, who was by his side, to take herself away for a time from their sight. Narada saluted Vishnu

and cried out, "Lord ! Surely it becomes you not. What have we done unto you, that you should put us to such disgrace and blacken our faces so in the hall of audience at Ayodhya ? Full well do we know that you and you alone have spirited away Sreemathi from our midst ; no other dare do it." Govinda closed his ears with his hands and exclaimed in horrified tones " Narada ! What sacrilege is this ? You call yourself a Devarshi and rave like some moon struck lover !" Narada came near and whispered, " But, how did I happen to come by the hideous baboon face." To which Narayana replied as softly, " Narada ! May be, you know not that Parvatha preferred to me a similar request. Now, what would you have me do? You are equally dear to me and could I refuse either? I made no difference between you, but gave what you asked without stint. Verily, you do not blame me for fulfilling the wishes and prayers of those that seek refuge of me." But, Narada interrupted him with, " Let be. There was a stranger between us, a glorious Presence with two arms and bows and arrows to grace them, who made away with Sreemathi, our intended bride. Just tell us who he might be." And Vasudeva spake back calmly, " The world holds many such as answer to your description, mighty magicians, masters of the arts of illusion. May be some one of them has abducted Sreemathi. Four-armed I am, with conch and discus gracing them ; you ever know me as such. Do you not ?" The sages were convinced. " Surely, we did wrong to suspect you of any complicity in this affair. We ought to have remembered that you are the same to all beings, high and low, friend and foe. That Ambareesha is at the bottom of this. He is not minded to give his daughter to such poor hermits as we, and has taken refuge in this disreputable trick to cheat us... Well, we will show him that we are poor in the world's

goods, but make up for it in spiritual might and super-human powers." They took respectful leave of Madhava and went back to where Ambareesha was at Ayodhya.

With flaming eyes and wounded hearts, they shot out a dreadful curse upon the innocent king. " You passed your word to give your daughter in marriage to one of us. You got us down to your place. You raised fond hopes in us which you were all the while planning to shatter. You gave your daughter to another and by your arts of illusion you took her from our sight. Even so, the utter darkness of ignorance shall wrap you in its impenetrable folds; and you shall not recognise yourself". And all at once the darkness of midnight wrapped him in its dread coils. But, Narada and his nephew had counted without their host, for, lo ! the flaming discus of the Lord appeared on the scene. It had orders to watch with sleepless care over the safety of Ambareesha and make short work of any that dare harm him. The dark horror that was choking Ambareesha was choked in its turn by the arrows of light shot from the flaming discus. It had to let go Ambareesha and turned upon its senders. They took to flight, their curse at their heels in hot chase and the discus behind the darkness consuming it ever. Thus, they fled north and south, west and east, above and below, right up to the Lokaloka mountain, even to the utter-most limits of the world-egg. But, the circle of fire was behind them, calm, consuming, remorseless. Then, the sages, miserable past expression, cried out, " Woe unto us ! What have we of pure vows and serene thoughts to do with the love of woman? We degraded ourselves from the calm levels of spiritual life and have got but what we deserve." They flew back to Vaikuntha into the presence of the Lord, clasped His feet with streaming eyes and cried out, " Lord of all ! Fountain of mercy ! protect us. Great Father ! save

us." Vasudeva looked down upon them with a pitying heart and an inscrutable smile. He motioned the darkness and the discus away and raising the poor suppliants, said in gentle tones that sank deep into their hearts, "Narada ! Parvatha ! Dear unto me are both of you ; but, Ambareesha is not less so. I could not stand by and see any one of you come to grief. My chakra caused you all this trouble and discomfort in the discharge of its duty to Ambareesha. I crave pardon at your hands." Narada and Parvatha reflected long and deeply over the whole affair and awoke to the conclusion that it was but the outcome of the Lord's illusion. And, in a fit of uncontrollable anger, they shook their hands at Him and cried "Janardana ! You took to yourself by cunning, all unmeet, her upon whom we had set our hearts. You made our faces hideous to behold before her whom we wanted to win by our graces of body and mind. It was *you* that trapped us into cursing poor Ambareesha. It was *you* that set at us the darkness and the flaming discus. Now, your acts shall reach upon your own head. You shall be born as son to Dasaratha *in the line of the very Ambareesha* who was cursed through you. You shall take *the very form* with which you managed to cloud the senses of Sreemathi. The girl will be born as the daughter of the goddess of earth ; but, king Janaka of Videha will find her out and bring her up as his own. You used your powers of illusion to abduct *our* intended bride even like an unprincipled Rakshasa. So, a Rakshasa shall carry away by force the wife of *your* heart. You wrung our hearts by depriving *us* of the woman who was to us more than life itself. So, *you* shall suffer the pangs of separation from your wife and the forests shall ring with your cries." But, the Lord of Peace said to them with a smile of ineffable sweetness, "Holy ones! Upon my head and eyes be it

to fulfil your commands. When were the words of such as you known to fail? Dasaratha will surely come in the line of king Ambareesha, and I will not fail to go down upon earth as Sree Rama, the eldest son of Dasaratha. Bharatha shall be my right arm and Sathrughna the left, while this Sesha on whom I recline, shall go with me as Lakshmana. And thou discus! Let these go unscathed. And thou darkness! come to me when I take birth as man. Go away from Ambareesha." Narada and Parvatha, now that their fit of insane fury passed away, were filled with unspeakable grief and remorse. "Fie upon us!" cried they "we swear by everything we hold sacred and holy, never to harbour the thought of woman, nay, the dimmest suspicion of it in our hearts"; and they sought the wildest recesses of the Himalayas to expiate the results of their folly in long and stern thapas—*Adb. R. IV.*

Once upon a time, in the Thretha-yuga, there lived a Brahmana, Kausika by name, who was a master-musician; he devoted his time, his talents and his resources to glorify the Lord and his works to the sweet strains of music. Padmaksha, another Brahmana who lived in the same part of the country, was an ardent admirer of Kausika; he lavished his great wealth upon the musician and saw that he wanted for nothing. Soon, the fame of Kausika spread far and wide; and disciples came to sit at his feet and learn.

One day, the ruler of Kalinga paid him a visit and was mightily pleased with him. "Sing of me" commanded he "you and your pupils. For my name will be crystallised in immortality by being set in your wonderful strains."

"Nay, your Majesty" mildly replied Kauseka "I sing but of the Giver of good." Vasishtha, Gauthama, Aruni, Sarasvathee, Vesya, Chitramala and Sisu assured the king

that theirs noble master would not use his divine gift to any other purpose. "Is it even so?" cried he "Well, my poets are not so fastidious. You shall hear them sing my glories." But, Kausika and his disciples said to one another, "Our ears, that have till now been used to listen to the recital of the ineffable glory of the Lord, shall not be polluted with ungodly sounds. Our tongues shall henceforth utter no word lest we may be tempted or forced to sing of puny mortals"; forthwith they closed their ears with pieces of wood and cut off the tips of their tongues. The king was enraged at this open defiance of his authority and drove them out of the country, while their wordly goods went to enrich his coffers.

When the time came for them to shuffle off this mortal coil, Brahma commanded the Devas and the Regents of the worlds to welcome them with divine honors and escort them to his Sathyaloka. From there they were conducted in high pomp to Vaikuntha. The Lord welcomed them with every mark of joy and honour and related to those around his throne the high deeds of Kausika and his disciples that won for them the worlds of light. "Kausika" said he "your unbounded devotion to me and your recital of my glories, not to speak of the countless souls you have led unto my feet, have earned for you the proud distinction of being one of the leaders of my angelic hosts. Dikbala shall be your name and you will ever stay by my side. And you, Padmaksha ! shall succeed to the office of Kubera, the lord of wealth, in that you have placed at the disposal of my elect your untold riches freely and without stint." There was high festival held in Vaikuntha to do honor to Kausika and his disciples. Thumburu, the Gandharva, was commanded to sing before the Lord, and he excelled himself on the occasion. Meanwhile, the Great Mother entered the presence to hear the music of Thumburu

and to have a sight of Kausika and the others so dear to her mother's heart. Her attendants cleared the way for her ; and Brahma, Rudra and Mahendra had to stand aside until she passed by. But, Narada paid no heed to the command and was haled out by the waiting-women who spared him not. Envy and jealousy of Thumbru, the fortunate singer, dug their brazen talons deep into his heart. The honors and rewards so profusely lavished upon the Gandharva were so many streams of molten lead poured into his eyes. Smarting under the blows and insults of the hand-maidens, he turned upon Lakshmi and shook his fist at her. And when she was coming back from the presence, he planted himself square across her way and cried, "The favoured consort of the Lord, you, above all, should avoid the least disrespect to a Brahmana. Like a brutal Rakshasa you set your minions at me, a Brahmana and a Rishi ; and it is but just that you should be born of the Rakshasas. You caused *me* to be put out of this hall ; likewise a Rakshasi will put *you* out of the city."

The worlds trembled in affright at this dread curse launched against the Mother of Mercy; the countless hosts of the Shining Ones cried out "Alas !" Narada came to his senses ; the fit of insane fury that had possessed him passed away and left him sad, weak, and supremely repentant. "Woe is me ! I am lost. I laid myself open to anger and have uttered a curse on the Mother of all. Thumbru stands immeasurably above me in that he has found favour in the eyes of the Lord and is chosen to sing in His presence. I did not recognise that I was all unfit to remain in that audience where the Mother of Mercy presided ; I was rightly driven out." He was raving like a maniac, bemoaning his fate ; when the Lord came to where he was, attracted by the news of the unprecedented curse pronounced against His consort. Then, Lakshmi bowed in

reverence to Narada and said in accents of gentle pity "Holy One ! It is my care to see that your words are fulfilled even to the letter. But, I pray you grant me a favour. A Rakshasi shall drink of a vessel in which has been stored the blood of the holy Rishis drop by drop ; and I shall be born of her womb." And, Narada feebly replied "Be it so."

One day Ravana, the Rakshasa king, came to the forests of Dandaka and chanced to pass by the hermitages of the holy Rishis shining in the splendour of their thapas. "Of a truth, I cannot, in conscience, call myself the conqueror of the three worlds if these acknowledge me not as their lord and master. But, there is neither fame nor profit in the useless massacre of these poor devils." So, he went to them and said "I am Ravana, the Rakshasa king of Lanka. The three worlds acknowledge my sway; and you have not yet made a formal recognition of it. You shall pay me yearly tribute of the things you hold most precious." "We are not rich" replied they "in the world's goods; and they are generally held as most acceptable to kings. Our life-blood is the only precious thing we have about us and that we are prepared to offer up to you." The idea tickled Ravana's fancy; it was the strangest of all tributes he had received till then; and its very strangeness made it all the more valuable in his eyes. "Ah ! That I shall have and it is a right royal tribute to me, the Terror of the worlds. I give you credit for the supreme originality of the conception." Forthwith, he drew a drop of blood with the point of his arrow from the wasted frame of every one of the Rishis of Dandaka and departed in high glee with the precious vessel holding the strangest tribute ever paid by a subject to his king. He gave strict orders to his servants to have it carefully preserved, for, said he in warning "It contains the deadliest of poisons ever known to man or God,

Asura or Rakshasa." Now, one of the Rishis of Dandaka, Gri-tsamada by name had a hundred sons and no daughter. His wife made his life weary with her ceaseless complaints at this cruel stoke of Destiny. So, he set himself to pray to Mahalaksmi that she should deign to be born as his daughter and at the close of each day's prayer poured a drop of very powerfully magnetised milk into a pitcher. As it chanced, he was not in his hermitage when Ravana paid them a visit. The Rakshasa used that very pitcher to hold the blood tribute paid to him by the Rishis, for he found no Rishi in the cottage and decided to attach as a tribute the most valuable object there—the pitcher.

Mandodari, the queen of Ravana, had long observed with an ever-growing grief of heart that her husband was growing more and more estranged from herself ; his heart was not with her ; he was ever wandering about the worlds ; and every time he failed not to bring back a choice collection of the fairest and the most lovely women he could find anywhere. Life grew a torture to her; and in a fit of despondency she rushed into the room where the deadly poison was so carefully preserved and quaffed it to the last drop. But, she was struck dumb with surprise to see that instead of the instant death that she bargained for, she gave birth to a girl of dazzling lustre. "I am lost" cried she in dismay, "It is a long time since my lord has been away; and if it should come to his ears that I conceived in his absence and gave birth to a girl, he will most naturally conclude that I have gone after strange men and will put me to a horrible death." So, she set out in her aerial car as if on a pilgrimage to Kurukshethra, where she buried the girl deep beneath the earth ; and purifying herself by a bath in the holy Sarasvathi, returned to Lanka. (Parvathi had conferred a boon upon the Rakshasa women that they

should conceive and forthwith give birth to a child which would grow at once to the age and size of the mother).

Long after, Janaka, ruler of Videha came there and began a sacrifice in the Jangala country. During the preliminary rites, he was ploughing the sacrificial ground and throwing out the herbs and weeds that grew upon it, when he came upon a lovely girl. He stood aghast at the strange find, but a voice from above dispelled his doubts. "Janaka ! Take this girl unto your heart and home; your daughter is she from this moment. She is to be the centre and visible channel of mighty world-activities and will bring down joy, peace and prosperity to the worlds. Seetha shall be her name, as she sprang up from the furrow (seetha).—*Ib.* V.VI.VIII. [Thus Seetha is more truly the daughter of Ravana than of Janaka.]

Once upon a time Mahadeva fought with the Asura Jalandhara long and fiercely ; but, all his energy, strength and tactics were wasted upon his foe, who grew all the more strong and fierce. Then, Parvathi, the wife of Siva, said to Vishnu, her brother "You know that Jalandhara owes his invincibility to the utter and flawless chastity of his wife Brinda." Vishnu caught her meaning and forthwith repaired to where Brinda abode. That night the lady dreamt that her husband was riding south on an ox his naked body smeared with oil ; and later on, he was seen as a headless corpse sinking into a horrible darkness. She awoke with a shuddering heart and roamed about the town, but could find no relief. She sought the lovely gardens in the suburbs and with two hand-maidens to accompany her, was passing through the dimly lit groves and arbors, when two Rakshasas of frightful mien burst upon her sight ; affrighted beyond measure, she ran hither and thither to escape the horror and came upon a

sage lost in meditation, with countless disciples respectfully waiting upon him. She sought refuge with him, clung to his neck and cried " Soul of mercy ! Save me. O ! Save me." The Holy One came out of his Samadhi and glancing an eye of pity at the trembling suppliant, calmed her wild fears and drove away the approaching Rakshasas with a terrible Hum. Brinda, beside herself with gratitude, joy and wonder, fell at his feet and exclaimed " Lord ! I entreat you to put an end to this frightful suspense. Jalandharasura, my husband, is even now carrying on a terrible fight with Mahadeva. Your opened eye will give me the surest and the speediest news of his welfare." The Rishi glanced upwards and two monkeys came down from the sky and touched his feet with their heads. He made them a sign, whereupon they vanished from sight and returned in a moment with the severed head and arms of the redoubtable Jalandhara. Brinda swooned away at the sight. The Rishi sprinkled her with the water in his pitcher, when she came back to consciousness and cried with a breaking heart, " Master of compassion ! you alone have power to restore my husband to life and to me." To which the sage replied " Noble lady ! It is not given to every one to bring back to life the object of the wrath of Mahadeva. But, my heart melts at your intolerable grief ; have your wish ;" and forthwith he and his disciple disappeared from view. Jalandhara stood before her as one awakened from deep slumber ; they returned to their capital in inexpressible joy and spent a long time of happiness.

One day she awoke from sleep by the side of her husband only to find Mahavishnu in his full glory occupying the place of Jalandhara. A storm of fury shook her whole frame when she realised that she was made the unconscious dupe and tool of the Lord of Vaikuntha. " Vishnu, you soul of perfidy ! You have perpetrated this iniquity through your unparal-

leled powers of illusion. Well, there is no crime that you are not up to ; your hellish ingenuity has compassed the ruin of my spotless chastity ; my lord Jalandhara was done to death in consequence. Ah ! my eyes are opened and I see you in at your true colours. You are the sanctimonious hypocrite, that villain of a Rishi whom I met in the gardens. Your disciples are Garuda and his brethren. The two monkeys who came down at your call are but Punyaseela and Suseela, the angels of your presence. The Rakshasas who drove me mad with affright are no other than Jaya and Vijaya, your door-keepers. But, you shall not escape the just wrath of one whose feet have never strayed from the path of virtue. These Jaya and Vijaya shall go down upon earth as Rakshasas and shall carry away with violence and outrage the wife of your heart. Misery, more than that which falls to the lot of man, shall crush you with iron grip and the forests will resound with your lamentations. Your omnipotence shall avail you nothing ; and you shall be driven to seek help of the beasts of the forests, even the monkeys. And this Punyaseela and Suseela shall retain for long years the shape they took to effect my ruin." And right away she threw herself into a blazing fire and joined her husband in the mansions of the blessed.—A. R. I. 4.

There lived in the town of Karaveera, near the Sahyadri mountains, a Brahmana named Dharmadatta. He was a devotee of Vishnu, whose grace he won by the recitation of the twelve-lettered manthra ; he observed the numerous fasts, penances and vows that go to make up the hard life of a Brahmana and kept open house for the way-farer and the needy. Once, on the eleventh day of the month of Kritthika, he observed a total fast, kept awake the whole night reciting the names and deeds of glory of the Lord and started before dawn to go to the temple and proffer his worship there. On his way, a Rakshasi barred his

path. He threw at her the materials of worship he carried with him, and sprinkled her with the water consecrated by the Thulasi leaves, mentally calling upon the Lord Vishnu meanwhile to help him. The dark cloak of sins fell away from the Rakshasi ; the memory of her past births came back to her; she fell at the feet of the Brahmana and cried :—

“ Holy Sir ! There lived in the Saurashtra country a Brahmana by name Bikshu and I was his wedded wife. Kalaha (quarrel) was my name. I contradicted him at every step ; he had not a moment of peace. I used to prepare the daintiest meals every day and partake of them to my heart’s content ; I left him to feed himself with what remained of them. One day he hit upon a very ingenious expedient to relieve himself of the life of misery he was leading. Said he to me “ My dear ! I am resolved to invite none, not even a dog, to our house; I have a friend who is the very incarnation of wickedness ; and he shall cross our doors only at the peril of his life.” At which I flared up in anger and cried “ You are a nice Brahmana. I know and I do not care to thrust it into your face that your friend is the most gentle-minded creature that ever trod the earth. You should consider yourself supremely blessed in being allowed to claim his friendship. I have set my heart upon getting him down to dine with us this day as our honored guest ; and no power in heaven or earth or hell shall stand in my way.” Forthwith I proceeded to his house, threw myself at his feet and humbly entreating him to pardon my husband’s countless faults of commission and omission, invited him to my house. I treated him to the most unbounded hospitality and placed before him the very best of everything I had or could procure. From that day, my husband made me do whatever he wanted to by ordering me just to the contrary. Thus we had a happy time of it and things went on swimmingly.

One day, there came about the anniversary of my father-in-law's death. My husband took me aside and with angry looks cried out "My dear! That cursed father of mine is bothering me even after he is dead and gone. This day I am expected to observe the anniversary of his confounded death. But, I will be cut into pieces before I stir a little finger to show him the least attention." Thereupon I slapped my thighs in fury and thrusting a fist under his nose, cried "Have you clean taken leave of your senses ? It is a pity that your parents ever gave birth to such a monster of ingratitude and wickedness. I know not what dark and loathesome hell is reserved for a son who harbours the thought of ever omitting to observe, in the very best manner he could, the anniversary of his parent's death ". And away I went and invited a large number of Sadhus. "Then" said my husband "I forbid you to prepare any thing in the shape of a meal. One Brahmana as a guest is enough to plague our lives. I will see the celebration of the anniversary rites shall not take more than a few minutes." But, I respectfully invited eighteen Brahmanas instead of the usual three ; took my bath, prepared every conceivable delicacy, saw with a careful eye that no detail of the funeral rites was omitted, even the slightest and it was near sunset when the Sraddha was over. Meanwhile my husband, fuming and raging, burst upon me with " I am almost dying of hunger and fatigue. Let us sit down to our meals with no more delay and throw the rest to the loafers and the vagrants in the streets." Whereat, I rebuked him harsh and said "The holy books enjoin that we should perform the funeral ceremonies of our forefathers on the anniversary of their death, and feed sumptuously the other Brahmanas that might have congregated there ; it is only when they utter the words 'We are content ; you may go and have your meals', that we

should think of our creature comforts. You are the strangest man that I have ever seen—the most ungrateful, the most irresponsible, fearing neither man nor God nor devil." And, I fed the assembled Brahmanas to their heart's content ; gave them money, clothes, rings, ear rings, umbrellas, sandals, seats without stint ; and only when they pressed me again and again to go and have my meals, did I seek my husband to invite him to have his meals. But, he was exceedingly wroth and cried "I will see that you dine first and rest your wearied limbs before I will think of food or drink". I clapped my hands in high glee and cried "What an atrocious specimen of humanity you are ! The wise ones say that we should not fast after performing the anniversary ceremonies of our ancestors ; else, you will have to perform the Sraddha again. Moreover, the wife that sits down to her dinner before her husband, is doomed to a frightful hell ; and you are not very anxious that I should tenant it, are you ?' And I haled him off to dinner, fed him to the full with the very best, and partook of the remains. Later on, my husband, in a moment of forgetfulness and entirely off his guard, said to me "My dear ! See that you throw these balls of food offered to the manes into the holy waters." No sooner said than done ; they were lying upon the dung heap and I was assiduously seeing to it that dogs and asses fed upon them freely. Seeing which, he was filled with inexpressible grief ; but, recollecting himself, he said to me with a smile "Well done ! let them stay where they are." But I lifted my hands in horrified indignation and cried "What sacrilege is this ! The balls of food offered to our ancestors to be lying on that unholy spot ! And would I stand by and see them polluted ?". And I drove away the asses and the dogs and reverently taking the balls of food, throw them into holy waters.

Long years passed over our heads until my husband, unable to go through this miserable cat-and-dog life with me, resolved to take unto himself another wife; whereat I was seized with a fit of jealousy and put an end to my tumultuous existence by poison. I stood before the judgment seat of King Yama, who called unto him Chithraguptha, the Keeper of the Book of Karma and said "Read out to me the good and evil deeds of this defunct." And to him replied the Recorder "Lord ! There is not one good act to the credit of this soul. Every day she used to dine to heart's content before her husband; she will take birth as the animal vulgo and feed upon her own excrement. She ate in secret from the vessel in which her food was cooked ; she will be born as a cat and feed upon her kittens. She took poison to end her life ; for countless years she will roam the earth as a shade (Pretha) ; then, she will be confined to a howling desert ; she will pass a very long time in that horrible spot and will go through three more births, growing more and more wicked each time." Accordingly I abode for fifteen years in that waste of sand, after which I entered the body of a Vaisya girl that chanced to die there and lived at the confluence of the rivers Krishna and Veni. But, some holy men that came there to bathe drove me out of that body. Thereafter, I have been wandering over the desolate places of the earth until I came here this morning ; and thanks to your unheard of generosity and compassion, was freed from all my sins. Now, how shall I put away this Pretha body of mine ? How shall I escape the three dreadful lives of iniquity ?".

The Brahmana heard her out with a heart well nigh breaking with supreme compassion and when she had ended, lifted his hands and exclaimed "I freely and with a full heart make over to you one half of the merit that accrues to me from the strict observance of this vow during the month of Kritthika." He recited in her hearing the all-

potent twelve-lettered manthra and sprinkled her with the water impregnated with the holy thulasi leaves. The pretha body dropped away from her and a glorious body of light took its place. A radiant car descended from the regions on high and the messengers of Vishnu took her with high honors to the abode of their Lord.

Dharmadatta continued to live as before, the whole-souled devotee of Vishnu ; when the time came for him to lay aside his garment of flesh, he was taken and his two wives with him, to where the Lord Vishnu awaited him in fond expectation. Eight thousand years did he remain in the presence of the Lord, rendering sweet service to Him; at the end of which he took birth among men as King Dasaratha of the solar race. His two wives accompanied him as Kausalya and Sumithra, while Kalaha, whom his noble generosity freed from a life of horror and shame, came back to him as Kaikeyi. The Lord could not keep himself away from his beloved devotee and took birth of him as his sons Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha and Sathrughna.—*1 b. 5.*

There lived of old a king named Padmaksha. He practised stern thapas to be blessed with a daughter who should be none other than Maha Lakshmi. The Mother of Mercy acceeded to his prayers, appeared before him and said “Padmaksha! seek permission of my Lord to have your wishes fulfilled.” Again the king had recourse to prayers, penances, vows, and fasts ; the Lord was pleased with his purity of heart and earnestness of purpose and gave him a pomegranate. One half of it was filled with juicy seeds and in the other half Padmaksha found a girl of dazzling lustre, whom he at once named Padma. She was the joy of his heart and the centre of his life ; and, when the time came for her to take a husband, Padmaksha instituted a Swayamvara and invited to it the kings of the earth. Rishis and Gods, Rakshasas and Asuras, the ruling

deities of animals, birds, fish, rivers, mountains, trees and metals came to his hall of audience in their native forms. When all were assembled before him, Padmaksha rose and made the following announcement, "I give Padma in marriage to him who clothes himself in the blue of the vaults of heaven right above our heads." The assembled myriads knew not what to think of it. Some set him down as a raving lunatic ; some proclaimed him as a very deep one, who put forward an ever impossible test to marry his daughter to some one whom he had already fixed upon. So, they banded themselves against him and resolved to kill him and take away Padma as the prize of war. But, they counted without their host ; for, Padmaksha met them with his keen shafts, which put to flight in a moment the craven multitudes of men and Devas. Alas ! every one of us can do his level best and no more ; and poor Padmaksha was overwhelmed, after a splendid fight, by the terrible Asuras and Rakshasas ; his capital was laid waste and the victors seemed in a fair way to be rewarded for all their pains and troubles, when Padma, the unconscious root of the strife and destruction, slipped through their fingers and threw herself into the fire.

She was but an embodiment of the potency that for ever lies concealed in the bosom of the Lord, and as such knew no death or destruction. For long years she dwelt in that fire-altar, free from the molestation of her unwelcome suitors. One day, Ravana, the Rakshasa king, chanced to come that way in his aerial car and his generals with him. He was on his tour, of conquest ; Sarana, one of his nobles, suddenly drew his attention to some object far down upon the earth and exclaimed "If my eyes do not deceive me, there is Padma reclining gracefully near that fire-altar. Your Majesty remembers, I am sure, how we had been once to her Swayamwara. That infatuated

fool of her father we put to death and searched far and wide for this marvel of a girl, but, failed to come upon her. It was but a wild-goose-chase for us all and our friends the Asuras. Well, better late than never. This time she shall not slip so easily through our fingers." Ravana directed his Pushpaka-vimana to where she was and sprang forward to catch her, when she flashed like a streak of flame into the altar and vanished from view. But, Ravana was an obstinate customer to deal with. He trod out the blazing fire and threw up the hot ashes, when lo ! five gems of unparalleled lustre met his view. He grabbed at them greedily, took them to Lanka and deposited them with all care in a casket. That night he recounted that marvellous adventure to his queen Mandodari and said "They deserve to shine for ever around your fair neck. Go bring them to me now." But, after a while, she returned with a discomfited look and exclaimed "It is too heavy for me to handle". Ravana thereupon proceeded to where it was, but for all his gigantic strength and marvellous boons, his twenty hands could barely move it from where it was—a toy casket to all appearance. He gave up the task as hopeless and opend it, when lo ! Padma, the mysterious maiden, came out of it smiling all sweetly. By that time the palace was filled with an eager crowd of Rakshasas, men and women, whom the news of that wonderful casket and its occupant had attracted thither. And to them did Ravana narrate in great detail the antecedents of Padma, when Mandodari turned upon him with a black frown upon her fair features and exclaimed " Krithya, the daughter of Pippalada the sage, brought destruction upon the members of the clan in which she was born. This Padma is but such another one. See you not that she was born but to destroy her father, and mother, kith and kin, capital and kingdom ? Who knows what awful ruin she is

commissioned to work out in this fair world ? What evil genius prompted you to bring her here ? I feel intuitively that she bodes you no good. She will, I am sure, prove your Fate. Lose not a moment in conveying her as far away from here as you can. But, wait. She is a terrible basilisk whose very looks carry death in them ; so, bury her deep, deep under the earth. It will not be long before a Son of Wisdom will come upon her by accident and bring her up as his daughter." But, Padma smiled all the more mysteriously and said in gentle accents " Well ; please yourselves. No one has yet scored a point against Fate. This Lanka, your fair capital, has not seen the last of me. Soon, sooner than you think, do I come here to call to account this Ravana and every one that calls himself his friend or follower. A third time do I visit this island home, to bring death to Paundraka, the son of yonder Nikumbha and to the hundred-headed Ravana, his noble ally. And for the fourth and the last time do I visit this doomed town, to work merited destruction upon the Asura Moolaka and Soora, the son of yon Kumbhakarna." Intolerable fear seized the hearts of the assembled Rakshasas in its mighty grip. But Ravana gnashed his teeth in rage and whipped out his sword exclaiming, " You shall not live to carry out your nefarious prophecies and evil croakings." But, Mandodari caught his wrist and said with a far away look in her lovely eyes, " Nay, nay, my Lord ! I see but too clearly that she comes to no harm through you or any one here. But, she is your Fate and there is no putting it away. Why anticipate, all foolishly, what is to come upon you years hence ?" Ravana gave way to her and had the casket with the maiden of evil in it conveyed far far from Lanka and buried fathoms deep beneath the earth.

Long long after, the Videhas ruled over the country. Janaka, a brilliant representative of that line of monarchs,

gave in gift to a holy Brahmana the plot of ground in which was buried the mysterious casket. The Brahmana spent many years before he could fix upon an auspicious moment to plough the ground ; and his Sudra tenant was ordered to bring it under cultivation. His plough-share struck against the casket. The farmer dug it up from where it lay buried for countless years and taking it to his master, said " Holy Sir ! I cannot sufficiently admire your wisdom in choosing this auspicious moment to plough your field. Here have I come across this casket, which, I am sure, contains treasures of priceless value, it is so heavy. It is yours to dispose of as you like." But, the high-souled Brahmana exclaimed " Neither I nor any other have any claim to it, but our king, who gave me this piece of land as a gift." Forthwith he took it to Janaka and said, " I have the pleasure to inform your Majesty that this casket was found by accident buried deep in the plot of land given to me as a gift. I request you to accept it of me, for, you are the rightful owner of it." But, Janaka lifted his hands in surprise and exclaimed, " I see not the justice of your argument. My gift to you of the piece of land included everything above it or beneath. It is yours by every law of gift. Save me, I pray you, from the sin of taking back what I gave as a free gift." Thus they argued and wrangled until Sathananda, the royal priest, interfered with an amused smile. " A nice pair of men you are, wasting your breath over a casket the contents of which you know not. Open it, pray and settle your claims to it after." Janaka acted upon this wise suggestion and opened the casket, when there flashed forth upon their wondering eyes a girl of marvellous beauty and dazzling radiance. The Brahmana reverently offered her to Janaka, who felt his heart go out to the precious find. He adopted her as his daughter and lived in her and for her.

Many are the names by which she is known among

men—*Mathulangi*, since she came out from a pomegranate, *Agni-garba*, from her long abode in the fire-altar, *Rathnavathi*, from her transformation into five rare gems in the hands of Ravana, *Bhoo-puthri*, seeing that she came out of the womb of the earth, *Janaki*, after her adopted father Janaka, *Padma*, as the daughter of Padmaksha, her first mortal parent, *Seetha*, from her being dug up by the point of the plough-share, *Vaidehi*, as the daughter of the king of the Videhas and *Maithili*, after her father the ruler of Mithila. Sree Rama, whose body shone with the radiance of the dark-blue sky, took her to wife ; and thus, after countless years, was the vow of Padmaksha fulfilled".—A. R. III.

Jaya and Vijaya, the gate-keepers of Maha Vishnu, came down on earth as Ravana and Kumbhakarna—Vide *ante*, note on *Sanathkumara*.

Once upon a time Narada felt an illimitable glow of devotion to the Lord, whereupon the curse launched against him by Daksha, the patriarch, dropped away. Indra was greatly troubled at this and apprehending a desire on the part of Narada to usurp his office, sought to destroy his purity of heart and concentration of mind by sending against him his lovely Apsarasas and Kama, the God of Love, but all in vain. Narada was inordinately puffed up at this, and boasted of his invulnerability to Mahadeva. "Poor fellow!" said Sankara to himself "he is on the high-road to ruin. It will go hard with him if Vishnu should get scent of this, for, there is no saying what His mighty illusion can make of poor Narada." And he strongly impressed upon the sage the necessity of holding his tongue on this subject before the Lord of Vaikuntha.

But, the ways of the Lord are mysterious past understanding and his illusion irresistible. Narada repaired forthwith to Swetha-dweeapa, where the Lord Vishnu adroitly induced him to describe in glowing terms his

purity of heart and invulnerability to love. Supreme pity filled the heart of the Lord; his overweening pride would prove the ruin of Narada. So, Janardana created out of His illusion a kingdom and a capital, with a king Seelanidhi as the ruler thereof. He had a daughter by name Viswamohini, to whose wedding (Swayamvara) the princes and the wise men of the earth were invited. Narada was one of the visitors and lost his heart to the lovely enchantress. Back he flew to Vaikuntha where Vishnu abode and clasping his feet exclaimed "Lord ! Grant me for a while to assume this resplendent form of yours. I have lost my heart to the lovely Viswamohni, the daughter of Seelanidhi. If I obtain not her hand in marriage, I die." "Well," replied Madhava "there is no saying what some will do when under the influence of love. I will not fail to do the very best for you."

Narada trod upon air on his way to the audience hall of Seelanidhi, his heart bursting with pride and joy at what he considered the all-fascinating form he had been blessed with. He took his place among the monarchs, utterly confident that Viswamohini had but to look at him to fall into his arms. But, the Lord Vishnu had changed his visage so that the beholders fled in affright at the horror. Two of the attendants of Paramasiva were in the secret and followed Narada unseen to get from him as much fun as they could. They sat behind him and whispered to one another but sufficiently loud to reach the ears of Narada "Ah ! what a splendid sight ! I cannot for a moment believe that this is the self-same Devarshi Narada whom we had seen time and oft. Where did he manage to transform himself so wonderfully ? Thrice-blessed is he who could, even for a moment, claim possession to such marvellous beauty and grace." Narada, their unconscious dupe, was drinking in this sweet praise with never-satisfied ears and was sure beyond all doubt that he had but to see the princess to win

her heart, to make her the slave of his enchanting beauty. So, he gave himself the proudest airs he could and in the excitement of his almost fulfilled hopes, eagerly craned his neck to receive the expected garland from the hand of the princess. Well, she came into the hall none too soon and preceded by her maidens, was leisurely passing between the line of monarchs, scanning them from beneath her long lashes and taking an inventory as it were of them with a glance. But, no sooner her eyes fell upon where Narada sat in exultant expectation than she uttered a frightful shreik of horror and repulsion and fled from the hall back to where her ladies were waiting for her. Yet, on the way she stood as if spell-bound at the sight of a young man of radiant presence and all-compelling beauty advancing towards her; and carried away by an impulse she could not divine, she threw the garland over his shoulders. Narada almost swooned away from rage and mortification; when the two tormentors approached him with reverently-folded hands and said " Believe us when we say that we feel ourselves no less insulted and outraged than yourself. An idiot of a girl, who is as blind as a bat to the splendour of such soul compelling beauty as yours, is, we swear, scarce worth a moment's thought. If you will not believe us, we entreat you to get a mirror wherein you will find that we have but done ill-justice to your charms." Narada was taken by the conceit and looked at his face as it was reflected in still water ; but, he started back in terror, for it was hard to believe that the monstrosity was himself. It flashed upon him like a revelation the trick played upon him by Vishnu and the horse-play of the two confounded Brahmanas. " Graceless wretches !" cried he, in a terrible voice " You wear the garb of Brahmanas, but like heartless Rakshasas, made me the butt of your practical jokes. You shall be born what you really are—Rakshasas."

Next, he went to Vaikuntha and on his way came upon the Lord Vishnu and by his side stood Visvamohini, for whom he had suffered so much. Poor Narada ! He could not see that the Lord was playing his powers of illusion upon him. ‘Ha ! I have caught you red-handed and you shall not escape. Your envy and double-dealing would disgrace the meanest creature that crawls the earth. If you wanted to have the girl, why not go about it like a gentleman and take your chances with the others ? I did not bargain with you for this gorilla face of mine when I requested you to render me every help in your power. But, you have counted without your host. I am more than a match for your wiles and witcheries. You assumed a charming shape to confound the heart of this girl, did you not? Well, you shall go down upon earth *in that very form* and wear it until you are sick of it. You obliged me with the face of a chimpanzee, did you not ? Well, *you shall beg help from such monkeys* and they shall be known as your benefactors. You took away from me her whom I would otherwise have got, did you not ? Well, a Rakshasa and your mortal enemy *shall abduct the lawfully wedded wife of your heart.*’ The Lord Vishnu accepted the fateful curse with a sweet smile. The irate sage completed his work of mischief by turning upon the two Brahmanas who followed him and said “ You flouted me, a Brahmana and a Rishi. Fierce Rakshasas you shall become and be freed from my curse when you fall in battle by the hand of yonder Vishnu. Laugh at a Deva-Rishi if you dare.”—*Ramayana of Tulasidas, Balakanda.*

The Manu Swayambhuva and his wife Satharoopa observed stern vows for thousands of years on the banks of the sacred Gomathi. The Lord Vishnu appeared unto them and said “ How can I serve you?” To which they replied in all reverence “ Lord! May we have a glimpse of the real Sree Rama”. “ One more boon” spoke the Lord

"shall you have." "Then, may we make bold to request to be blessed with a son like yourself." "Well, I myself will have the honour." And Dasaratha, the ruler of Ayodhya, was no other than the Manu.—*Ib.*

Sathyakethu, king of Kekaya, had two sons by name Prathapabhanu and Arimarddana. The former succeeded to the throne and ruled his subjects wisely and well. One day he went a-hunting and lost himself in the dark forests chasing a boar. At sunset, he came upon a hermit of whose lavish hospitality he partook that night. He thanked the recluse in warm terms and said "Holy Sir ! may an unworthy admirer of yours crave to know the name of his charming host ? This wild forest home seems no meet place for one of your stamp and refinement."

Now, the seeming anchorite was no other than a proud king whom Prathapabhanu had defeated in battle and deprived of his kingdom. He thanked Fate that had brought within his grasp without the least effort the very man round whom his thoughts of revenge had centred for long years. So, he replied charmingly "Your majesty will gain nothing by knowing the name of an obscure person like myself. Ekathanu was I named. I saw the dawn of Creation and have been keeping on this fleshly tenement of mine all through, thanks to my poor yogic powers". Prathapabhanu was in the coils of the wily serpent ; and unbounded reverence towards the holy One filled his heart.

He fell at his feet in profound supplication and cried "Lord ! I throw myself on your mercy and crave of you long life, prosperity, victory in battle and unlimited power". The hermit pretended to be in deep thought over the momentous request ; he came out of it with a sigh and said gravely "Do nothing that would give the least offence to the Brahmanas. No one should know what has passed between

us. Promise this and you shall have your wish." The king was profuse in his protestations of sincerity and silence and asked "Lord ! How shall I set about to win the favour of the mighty Brahmanas?" And the villain replied with a solemn face " For a year from today you shall sumptuously feed a hundred thousand Brahmanas every day. Proclaim it through all lands. I will undertake to prepare what they shall eat. Those who partake of anything that I have laid my hands on will come under your influence. Thus, within a year the Brahmanas in your kingdom and around will be yours to command, and through them the gods. Your chaplain will take serious objection to this arrangement, for he sees not beyond the present ; so, I shall bring him down here and keep him safe until my plan is matured. I will see that you and your horse reach your palace in the twinkling of an eye. On the third day from this I shall come to you, and you will recognise me by this sign." Prathapabhanu revelled in rosy dreams of his bright future and slept the sleep of the just.

Soon after, there came into the cottage Kalakethu, the dear friend of the sanctimonious hypocrite. He was a Rakshasa by birth and had ten brothers and hundred sons whom Prathapabhanu had killed in battle. He was ever thirsting to take deep revenge upon his foe and could not contain himself with joy, for fate had played into their hands right royally. Kalakethu transported the sleeping king and his steed to his palace in a trice ; and brought back the poor royal chaplain, who was kept a close prisoner in the hermitage.

Next morning Prathapabhanu was surprised and pleased to find himself in his palace. Surely, it was then no dream ; and everything would come about as promised. On the third day, the villain came to him in the guise of his chaplain and revealed his identity by making the sign

agreed upon. Prathapabhanu was overjoyed ; things were going on swimmingly. Proclamations were issued far and wide that the king had arranged to entertain sumptuously a hundred thousand Brahmanas every day for a year. From every part of the country Brahmanas, man, woman and child crowded to the capital to partake of the well-known bounty of the king. Kalakethu, the Rakshasa, disguised himself as the cook and had the flesh of Brahmanas cooked and mixed with the food served to the assembled multitudes. But, an invisible voice from on high exposed the whole fraud, and forbade every one there to touch his food. Whereupon the Brahmanas stood up as one man and uttered a frightful curse against the king " You and yours shall be destroyed forthwith and roam the earth as blood-thirsty Rakshasas." Again the invisible voice was heard to say "The king is perfectly innocent. You have cursed the wrong man." Prathapabhanu ran to the royal kitchen ; but, neither cook nor any food could he set his eye upon.

The curse of the Brahmanas came to roost, in that the foes of the king banded against him, slew him in battle and extinguished his race. Then, Prathapabhanu and his brother Arimarddana were born as Ravana and Kumbhakarna ; Dharmaruchi, their minister, accompanied them as the virtuous ibheeshana.—*Ib.*

Kasyapa, the patriarch and Adithi his wife, prayed long and earnestly to the Lord to have the proud honour of calling him their child. Accordingly Vishnu was pleased to accede to their prayer ; they were born as Dasaratha and Kausalya, while the Lord and his great Maya came down on earth as Rama and Seetha.—*Ad. R. II.*

Once upon a time the Devas happened to defeat the Asuras, who took refuge with Sukra, their Guru and protector. " I go " said he " to learn from Mahadeva such arts of warfare and powers of illusion as are not within the command

of Brihaspathi, the guru of the Devas. Engage yourselves in unremitting thapas, casting aside your weapons of offence and defence. The Devas will not harm you the while"; and he observed a stern vow for a thousand years. The Devas took advantage of his absence to engage the Asuras in battle, who sought refuge with Khyathi, the mother of Sukra and the wife of Brighu, the Patriarch. She promised to protect them and when the Devas turned against her she deprived Indra of the power of motion. The Lord Vishnu came to his assistance, but she began to consume him with the might of her fiery thapas; whereupon he cut her head off with his chakra (discus). Brighu came to know of it and pronounced a curse upon the Lord. " You shall be born on earth as man four times and three ;" and forthwith brought Khyathi back to life through his yogic powers. Vishnu carried out the behests of Brighu and incarnated on earth as Dattathreya, Parasurama, Rama, Vyasa, Krishna, Upendra the son of Kasyapa and Kalki.—*Vayupurana*.

67. 33. *Shone* :—The horse-sacrifice and Puthreshhti of Dasaratha do not solely account for the coming down of the Lord ; but Kausalya's thapas drew Him down to her irresistably.

68. 1. *Gave birth to* :—Rama came out of the womb of Kausalya even as he was in Vaikuntha with four arms, the divine weapons, Sreevathsa the mole, the garland, Vaijayanthi, etc. Kausalya was overwhelmed with joy and sang high his countless perfections and glory. " Lord ! I entreat you that this divine form be hidden from the eyes of mortals and that you take a human shape." To which He replied graciously " Be it so. I have promised to accede to the prayers of Brahma and the gods that I should go down upon earth as man and destroy Ravana and his dark brood. Dasaratha and yourself have in past birth performed dire penance that I should be born as your son ;

and that is why I chose to manifest myself to you in my divine form—*Adh. R. I. 3. A. R. I. 2.*

16. *The divine four* :—1. Rama was the incarnation of Dharma; Lakshma exemplified the truth that one should render humble service to the Lord all his life; Bharatha was the perfect example for all time of the doctrine of surrender to the Lord; and Sathrughna chose to be the practical exponent of the grandest of all truths,—supreme surrender to the Lord's elect.

2. Rama had the complexion of the blue vaults of the empyrean; Lakshmana shone like molten gold ; Bharatha was of a splendid sea-green and Sathrughna was white as driven snow.

3. *Q.*—As appears from Dasaratha's division of the Payasa among his wives, Lakshmana had more in him of the divine essence than Bharatha. Further, Sumithra might have partaken of the Payasa before Kaikeyee. Again, when the brothers met at Nandigrama, Bharatha is said to have saluted Rama, Seetha and Lakshmana. So, it is but reasonable to infer that Lakshmana was the elder of the two.

A :—No. It was Kaikeyee that partook of the Payasa first, since we read that Sumithra was given a portion of it a second time. Again, Rama addresses Lakshmana more than once as *he who is born after Bharatha*. As to the incident at Nandigrama, it is generally understood that Bharatha saluted Rama and Seetha and but embraced Lakshmana only. Authoritative statements that may be found in other works that do not fit in with the above, ought to be explained as applicable to other Rama incarnations in previous world-periods.

4. The queens of Dasaratha are said to have conceived after they partook of the Payasa; hence the gross and the subtle vehicles of SreeRama and his brothers were not formed of the matter that goes to build up our universe and its inhabit-

ants. The puranas affirm emphatically that the five elements nor their combinations have anything to do with the vehicles in which the Lord manifests himself during his incarnations. The six divine perfections transformed themselves into the Payasa. The bodies did not grow upon food and drink nor were in the least affected by heat or cold, fire or water, weapons or missiles. They adapted themselves to the least wish of those that tenanted them.

26. *Thirteenth day* :—Or, the twelfth from the birth of Lakshmana. The period of pollution is twelve days in the case of a Kshathriya when a child is born to him; but, the pollution due to the birth of Lakshmana occurred within the period of the former ; hence, Dasaratha was purified on the thirteenth day.

Vasishtha. Akshathriya is not qualified to give the names and generally does it though his Purohitha.—*Kathaka.*

28. *Rama* :—So called because the Yogis, the Rishis and every object of creation *delight in* him. “The Lord was named Sree Rama as he was the consort (ramana) of Mahalakshmi, enthroned on the Lotus. He who meditates on the profound mysteries of this name acquires the merit of meditating on His thousand ineffable names”—*Padma-purana.*

Bharatha :—As he *bore* the responsibility of governing the kingless kingdom when Dasaratha departed to the worlds of bliss and Rama to the dark forests.

30. *Lakshmana* :—As he was blessed with the supreme *good fortune* to render all services to Rama.

Sacraments :—As he had in him the mighty energy that lays low the foes within and without.

34. The Vedic Religion teaches us that the highest Dharma of every jeeva lies in his performing the duties of his status in life without the least desire for the fruits thereof ; purity of heart engendered thereby leads him to

the feet of the Masters of Compassion ; the bonds of Karma fall away from him ; unbounded wisdom and power and bliss are his reward ; and he leads the other jeevas on the path of Light that he has trod so gloriously. Various sacraments (Samskaras) are ordained for him, from the moment he enters the womb of his mother to when he casts away from him his gross and subtle vehicles and joins the glorious band of the Pithris (ancestors). These rites aim at the building up of each vehicle with the purest atoms possible that they may enable the consciousness to manifest its countless varieties and acquire experience in all worlds. Of them the most important are Garbha-dhana, Pum-savana, Seemanthonnayana, Jatha-karina, Nama-karana, Anna-pra-sana, Chooda-karana, Go-dana, Upa-nayana, Sam-avarthana, Vivaha, Dahana, Sanchayana and Sapindee-karana.

Garbha-dhana—The husband lays his hands on the spot where the womb of the woman is located and says “ May Vishnu make ready your womb. May Thwashta build up forms. O, Sineevali ! do thou impregnate it.” (Rig Veda XI. 85, 21 22.) ;and he proceeds to place his seed in her. This sacred rite should not be performed carelessly or contemptuously or with hearts filled with impure thoughts or with the sole object of satisfying one’s lust. He is bringing into manifestation a form, in that he has in him a fragment of the Infinite Potency which brought this universe into existence ; he is furnishing a Jeeva with vehicles that will be utilised by him to tread the Path of Perfection. He should pray that a pure Jeeva might dwell in the abodes he means to build and obtain supreme wisdom. His manas and his consciousness should be centred on his favourite deity ; while the manas and the consciousness of his partner in that glorious work should be centred on himself.

Pum-savana :—It is performed in the third month after conception, on a day when the asterism Pushya or

Sravana rules it. The Anna-maya and the Prana-maya sheaths are being built up within the mother's womb ; and the rite is meant to secure the birth of a son. The Soma creeper or the shoots of the Dharbha grass or the tender shoots of the Aswattha tree or a chip of a sacrificial post well seasoned with fire should be pounded and the juice dropped into the right nostril of the mother (the remains in the sacrificial ladle after the offering had been made is also used for this purpose) ; while he should recite the Rig Veda I. i. 3 ; III. iv. and xxxvii. 2 ; II. iii. 9—*Sankhyana-grihya-soothra.*

The mother should fast that day and drink three handfuls of curds from a cow whose calf is of the same colour as herself. Each time two beans and one corn of wheat should be mixed with it. The husband asks her "What do you drink ? What do you drink ?" To which she should reply "The conception of a son," three times. She is taken under the shadow of a round room and the juice of a fresh medicinal plant is dropped into her right nostril. An offering is made to Prajapathi, after which the husband touches her heart and recites the manthra "O, thou with well-parted hair ! I know what is concealed in your heart, in the Prajapathi. This is truth. May I not experience the sorrow arising from sons."—*Aswalayana-grihya-soothra.*

The ceremony should be performed before the foetus quickens—*Paraskara-grihya-soothra.*

The husband stands behind his wife, takes hold of her right shoulder, and placing his finger on her navel, recites the Manthra-brahmana I. iv. 8. He buys a shoot of the Aswattha tree with twenty-one grains of black gram. It should be fresh ; it should not be worm-eaten ; it should have a fruit on each side like the testes in shape. He recites over it the manthra "O, medicinal plants that abound

everywhere ! Impart with a good heart special potencies to this shoot. May this accomplish the wishes of my heart"; and places it in the open air. A virgin or a chaste woman or a celibate or a Brahmana woman should pound it with a stone, but should not draw the stone backwards. The wife assumes a reclining position, when the juice is dropped into her right nostril and the Manthra-brahmana I. iv. 9 is recited—*Khadira-grihya-soothra*.

When buying the shoot, he should say " If you belong to Soma, I buy you for Soma. If you belong to Varuna, I buy you for Varuna. If you belong to the Vasus, I buy you for them. If you belong to the Rudras, I buy you for them. If you belong to the Adityas, I buy you for them. If you belong to the Maruths, I buy you for them. If you belong to the Visvadevas, I buy you for them." At the end of every one of the above mantras he gives the owner of the shoot three grains of black gram ; or, he may place them at the foot of the tree.—*Hiranyakesi-grihya-soothra*.

In the fourth month after conception is performed the sacrament known as *Garbha rakshana* (protection of the foetus) is performed. Six food-offerings are made in the fire, while the six Riks of the Rig-Veda X. 162, are recited. The limbs of the mother are smeared with the ghee at the end of the recitation of every one of the Riks in *Ib.* 163—*Sankhayana-grihya-soothra*.

This sacrament safeguards the foetus from every danger or harm.

Seemanthonnayana—In the seventh month(the fourth—*Aswalayana*; the sixth or the eighth—*Paraskara*; the fourth or the sixth—*Khadira* ; the fourth or the sixth or the eighth—*Gobhila*) from conception the wife takes a bath and wears new clothes ; she sits behind the fire, and her husband makes offerings into the fire, touching her meanwhile and reciting the Maha-vyahrithis. Rice and green pulse are mixed

and cooked and offered into the fire, when he recites the manthra "May Dhatha give long life and prosperity to those who worship him. May he obtain the grace of the deity endowed with eternal perfections. Dhatha confers offspring and wealth ; Dhatha evolved this universe ; Dhatha will bestow an offspring on this sacrificer. Make an offering unto him with clarified butter in full measure and overflowing." He recites Rig Veda X. 121 ; X. 184. 1 and parts the hair of his wife in two beginning from the forehead. A quill of the porcupine with three white spots on it or the shoots of the Dharbha grass and fig berries are used for this purpose. They are then placed on her lap. The berry figs are strung on a cord of three strands which is tied round her neck while she says, "This tree is full of juice. Bring forth children even like this." [Cooked rice mixed with sesamum seeds is spread over with ghee ; she is made to look at it and is asked "What do you see?" She replies "Offspring." —*Khadira* II. 2. The hair is parted thrice, reciting the three syllables Bhooh, Bhuvah Swah respectively. She should eat the food that she looks upon. Aged Brahmana women sit by her and express auspicious sentiments like " May you be the mother of heroes. May your wedded life be long and happy"—*Gobhila* II. 7.] Then he says to those who play upon the veena, "Sing of king Soma." Fried rice beaten flat is mixed with water and given her to drink, while the husband recites the mantras of Rig Veda X. 184, 1 ; II. 32, 4 to 8. Next he touches her and says " You are Garuthman. You are Suparna ; the Thrivrit Soma is your head ; Gayathra is your eyes ; the Chandasas are your limbs; Yajus is your name ; Saman is your body." She is then gaily decked with gold and made to sing joyfully.—*Sankha-yana-grihya-soothra*.

Water is taken from a river down the current in a fresh vessel ; the plant Thooryanthi is placed at the foot of the

wife ; the husband touches her head, recites the mantras of the Yajur Veda II. 11, 14, 15, 16, 17 and sprinkles her with the water. This ensures safe and painless delivery. *Apasthamba-griha-soothra VI. 14.*

If she happens to miscarry, the husband takes hold of her wet hand and passes it upwards over her body three times, reciting the mantra " May Thwashta bind you with his bonds and cause you to go up. May he not make you go down. Dwell for ten months in your mother's womb. Do not cause death to men." When the time of confinement draws near, he places a vessel of water at her head and the plant Thooryanthi at her feet and touches her stomach. Then, he passes his hand over her body from head to foot, saying " This foetus shall move even as the wind blows or the waves move." —*Hiranyakesi-grihya-soothra II. 1. 2.*

The above sacraments protect the mother and the child and concentrate all the forces that go to build up bodies of the Jeeva well and harmoniously. But, we have lost the wisdom and the will and the purity that render them efficacious and potent ; hence, they are to us only unmeaning mummeries and useless relics of the past.

Jathakarma:—The father thrice breathes upon the child as soon as it is born and draws in his breath reciting the mantra " Draw in your breath by the Rig Veda ; inhale by the Yajur Veda ; exhale by the Sama Veda." Butter, honey, milk, curds and water are mixed together or a paste of rice and pulse, with which the child is fed thrice in a gold spoon.

Namakarana.—He gives the child a name saying " I give you for your food the honey, the Veda taught by Savitha who fulfils all our wishes. May you be blessed with long life and live among men for a hundred years, protected by the Devas." It should be known only to the

parents. Another name approved of by the Brahmanas given to him on the tenth day ; and this is his name among men. The black, white and red hairs of a black ox are founded, and mixed with butter, honey, milk and curds and given to the babe four times ; so holds Mandukeya. The father recites the following on that occasion “ Bhooh, I place in you the Rig Veda,—so and so—Swaha ! Bhuvah, I place in you the Yajur Veda—so and so—Swaha ! Swah, I place in you the Sama Veda—so and so—Swaha ! Bhooh, Bhuvah, Swah, I place in you the Vakovakyas, the Ithihasas, the Puranas, Om and all the Vedas—so and so—Swaha!” He whispers into the right ear of the babe the word *Vak* that he may be endowed with excellent understanding ; he recites the manthra beginning with “ The deity of speech with Prana and Manas.” A gold ornament is tied to the right hand of the child with flax and given to the Brahmanas on the tenth day or kept by the parents. When the period of pollution is over and the mother come out of the chamber of confinement, the parents bathe, dress themselves and the child in new garments ; they cook the offering in the fire that had been kept burning from the time of delivery and offer to the day of the birth of the child, to the three asterisms and to their guardian deities. The offering to the natal star of the child should be placed in the middle. Two offerings are made saying “ May this excellent Agni be gracious unto our prayers and bestow upon you to-day a very long life. Oh Agni that confers length of years ! Accept this food and grow in strength immeasurably. May your face and abode be filled with ghee. Drink of the honey that flows from the cow (ghee) and protect this child even as a fond father.” The tenth offering is made and the Rig Veda I. 91. 7 is recited. Then the name of the child is given out to all and the blessing of the Brahmanas invoked. This is repeated every month in the same fire on the

day of its birth. After a year the fire is scattered, and the monthly offering is made in the householder's fire as long as the child lives.

Anna-prasana :—The child is fed with cooked food in the sixth month after birth. The flesh of a goat is given to it if the parents want it to be healthy and grow strong ; the flesh of the bird Thithiri if they want it to grow in thejas *i. e.* spiritual lustre ; the flesh of fish if they want it to grow in speed ; cooked rice mixed with ghee, milk, curds and honey, if they want it to grow in brightness. Rig Veda IV. vii 4, 5 ; XI, 61. 19 are recited meanwhile, as also the manthra “Lord of food ! Give us food that increases our strength and causes us no grief. Make the giver of food prosper. Endow us and the men and the beasts with energy. Agni ! Bestow long life and spiritual lustre on this child. Varuna ! King Soma ! Adithi ! May you and other Devathas bless him with long life.” Then the babe is made to sit on Dharbha grass laid with its ends to the north, and Rig Veda I. 17. 15 is recited. The Maha-vyahrithis are uttered when the child is fed. The mother partakes of the remains.

Chooda-karma—is performed in the third year for the Brahmanas, in the fifth for the Kshathriyas and in the seventh for the Vaisyas. The fire is lighted in the outer room ; rice, green gram, sesamum, black gram and other grains are placed in vessels; cow's dung, darbha grass, fresh butter, a mirror and a brass knife are placed on the ground north of the fire; cold water is mixed with hot and sprinkled over the left part of the child's head thrice, reciting meanwhile the words “Pure objects ! Sweet objects ! Beautiful objects ! Mix ye with one another that you may attain unbounded wealth. May the waters wet you and bestow long life and splendour upon you. I give you thrice the length of life that falls to the lot of Kasyapa, Jamadagni, Agasthya,

and other Devathas". The hair is combed with a porcupine quill ; fresh butter is laid over it ; a young shoot of darbha grass is placed within it with the words "O, darbha grass ! Protect him" ; the hair and the darbha grass is touched with the mirror. He takes the knife with the words "You are sharpness. The axe is your father. Do no harm to this child." He next says " O Brahmanas ! Shave the head of this child with this knife with which Savitha, the wise, shaved of yore the beard of Varuna ; with this with which Brihaspathi, the Dhatha, shaved the head of Indra. May this child lead a long and happy life " and cuts thrice the darbha grass and the ends of the child's hair. He repeats this operation twice on the right side of the head.

The above rites are performed for girls, but without mantras. The hair is buried in some place north-east covered with thick brushwood or on the banks of a stream. The grains and the vessels are given to the barber.

Upanayana—is performed in the eighth year for the Brahmanas or the tenth, in the eleventh year for the Kshathriyas and in the twelfth year for the Vaisyas ; but should not be put off later than the sixteenth, the twenty second and the twenty-fourth years, after which period they become degraded ; no one should perform for them sacrifices or Upanayana or instruct them in the vedas ; they are put out from society.

The girdle of the Brahmana should be of munja grass, of the Kshathriya of the bow-string, and of the Vaisya of goat's hair. The Brahmana's staff is made of the Palasa or the Bilva tree ; the Kshathriya's of the Aswattha ; the Vaisya's of the fig tree. The Brahmana's staff should come up to the level of his nose ; the Kshathriya's to the level of his forehead ; the Vaisya's to the level of his hair. The things that the boy has with him at the time of the Upanayana should be given to his preceptor.

The boy has his head shaved, takes a bath and adorns himself, after which the preceptor performs a Homa ; and they sit behind the fire, the boy facing west and the preceptor facing south. During the act of initiation the boy stands while the preceptor sits. The manthra " This Devatha, this girdle which protects us from evil words, that purifies our clansmen, that has as its covering the in-going and the out-going breaths," is recited thrice and the girdle is placed round the boy's loins in three coils from the right to the left. It may be knotted once, thrice or five times.

The preceptor takes the sacred thread in his hand and places it on the shoulders of the boy with the words " You are the holy thread (Yagnopaveetha). I make you wear the holy thread". Both of them take a handful of water. "What is your name ?" asks the preceptor of the boy. " Holy sir !" replies the latter " I am so and so." " Are my Pravara Rishis your Pravara Rishis ? " " Holy sir ! Your Pravara Rishis are verily mine." " Say that you are a disciple." "Holy sir ! I am a disciple." Then, the teacher sprinkles thrice the hands of the boy with the words " Bhooh, Bhuvah, Swah." He takes hold of the boy's hands and says " By the energy of the god Savitha, by the arms of the Aswini devathas, by the hands of Pooshan, I initiate you". He recites Rig Veda II. 23, 1 in case the boy desires to have many disciples ; Ib. VIII. 21, in the case of the Kshathriyas; and the Maha-vyahrithis in the case of those that are sickly. He then says " Bhagha takes hold of your hands ; Savitha takes hold of your hands ; Pooshan takes hold of your hands ; Aryaman takes hold of your hands. You are the God Mithra by right. Agni is verily your preceptor. O, Agni ! I consign this disciple to your care. O, Indra ! I consign this disciple to your care. O, Soorya ! I consign this disciple to your care. O, Visvadevas ! I consign this disciple to your care. I walk like Indra. I walk like Soorya."

The disciple repeats the last two sentences after him and they go round the fire. He stands behind the boy, reaches over his right shoulder and touches his heart with his right hand, and saying "May I be supremely dear to your pure heart," he goes round the fire the other way, observing silence. He places his hand on the heart of the boy and saying "I bring your heart under my will. May your Manas obey mine. You will rejoice to your heart's content with my words. May Brihaspathi unite you with me. You are the celibate of Rama," he goes round as before. He touches the left arm of the boy with his left hand saying "You are a disciple. Offer sacred fuel into the fire. Sip water after excreting. Wait upon the preceptor. Sleep not during the day. Observe silence while you offer the sacred fuel into the fire ;" and the disciple replies to the above categorically. Then sacred fuel is offered into the fire either silently or with the words "O, Agni ! This sacred fuel is yours."

At the expiration of a year or of three nights or immediately, the preceptor initiates the disciple into the mysteries of the Savithri manthra. He should give to the Brahmana the Gayathri (Rig Veda III. 62. 10) of which Rishi Viswamithra is the seer; he should give to the Kshathriya the Thrishtub (*Ib. I.* 35.2) of which Rishi Hiranyakasthoopa is the seer; he should give to the Vaisya the Jagathi manthra (*Ib. IV.* 40. 5.) of which Rishi Vamadeva is the seer; or *Ib. I* 35. 9 of which Rishi Hiranyasthupa is the seer. But it may be any manthra dedicated to Savitha. The preceptor sits to the left of the fire, facing the west and the disciple sits facing the west and says "Holy sir ? Be pleased to initiate me"; to which the teacher replies "Om "Holy sir ! Initiate me into the Savithri" requests the disciple"; whereupon the teacher recites Rig Veda III. 62. 10 ; foot by foot and next right through. Then the disciple

repeats thrice after the teacher the manthra "You are named the waters ; you are named the happy ; you are named the essence-bearers ; you are named the indestructible ; you are named the fearless ; you are named the undying ; and I partake of you even as you are. May I obtain your blessings." The preceptor gives him the staff reciting the five Riks of V. 51. 11 to 15. He makes him go round the fire and sends into the village to beg alms. The boy asks alms first from his mother or of some woman who does not say him nay. He takes it to his teacher and partakes of it with his permission. Offering the sacred fuel into the fire, going out for alms, sleeping on the ground, and waiting upon his teacher are his daily duties.

After the course of Vedic study is over, the disciple is seated on the skin of a bull and his hair, beard and nails are shaved, mixed with rice, pulse, sesamum, mustard and the flowers *Apamarka* and *Sadapushpi* and thrown at some distance from the village. He takes his bath and is sprinkled with the Apohishtheeya-sooktha (Rig Veda, X. 9) ; he is gaily adorned and puts on a pair of new clothes reciting *Ib.* I. 152. 1 ; he is made to wear a gold ornament reciting the *Vajasaneyee-samhitha*, XXXIV. 50; his head is covered with the recitation of Rig Veda X. 128. 1 ; he is given an umbrella with the words of *Ib.* I. 123. 4 ; a pair of sandals with the words of *Ib.* X. 18. 6 ; and a bamboo staff with the words of *Ib.* VIII. 17. 10. He sits by himself the whole day. Then, he ascends a chariot reciting *Ib.* VI. 47. 26 ; X. 152. 1. Before he goes to his house, he must enter a place where they will offer him Arghya with the flesh of a cow or a goat. Or he may start from a cow-pen or from the foot of a tree with fruits. Having come to his house, he gets down from the chariot reciting *Ib.* II. 21. 6 ; I. 22. 15. That day he should partake of the food that he likes best—*Sankhayana-grihya-soothra*.

The name of a Brahmana must indicate auspiciousness ; the name of a Kshathriya must indicate strength ; the name of a Vaisya must indicate wealth ; the name of a Soodra must indicate humility. These must respectively connote happiness, protection, wealth and service. The names given to girls should be easy to pronounce, pleasant to the ear, plain of meaning, auspicious, with a long vowel at the end and soft like a blessing.—*Manu II.*

The sacraments of Jathakarma, Namakarana, Annaprashana and the Choodakarana remove the sins and the defects accruing from the father's seed and the mother's womb.—*Yagnavalkya I. 13.*

The father and the mother give birth to a child from mutual love. His birth from his mother's womb is his gross birth ; but, the birth given him by his teacher who initiates him into the Savithri manthra is his real birth. It knows no change ; it knows no destruction.—*Manu II, 147.*

The three strands of the sacred thread stand for Sath, Chith, Ananda; or Sathwa, Rajas, Thamas; or Brahma, Vishnu, Maheswara; or Bhooh, Bhuvah, Swah ; or manas, speech and body. He who wears the holy thread should keep under perfect control his thoughts, words and acts. His three-knotted staff symbolises this.—*Manu XII.*

The disciple completes his course of vedic studies, observes the vows, offers the fees to the preceptor and with his permission, comes back to his parents.

Consistently with the rule that a Brahmana desirous of Brahma-thejas should be initiated in this fifth year, a Kshathriya desirous of strength in his sixth year and a Vaisya desirous of wealth in his eighth year, King Dasaratha had the rite of Upanayana performed for his sons in their sixth-year.—*A. R. II. 26.*

When they had completed their studies under their teacher, they made a tour of pilgrimage for six months with

Rishi Vasishtha, the ministers, the retinue and the troops.
Ib. II, 29.

69, 9. *Training* :—Every Arya should acquaint himself with 32 sciences and 64 arts. The four Vedas—Rig, Yajus, Saman and Atharva; the four Upavedas—Ayur-veda, Dhanur-veda, Gandharva-veda and Artha-veda ; the six Vedangas—Phonetics, Grammar, Ritualism, Vedic philology, Astronomy and Prosody ; the six Darsanas—Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisesika, Poorva Meemamsa and Utthara Meemamsa ; Ithihasas, Puranas, Smrithis, Materialism, Economics, Erotics, Architecture, Rhetoric, Poetry, Languages, Ready Wit ; Comparative religion, Customs and manners of all nations—these form the 32 sciences. Of the 64 arts the following are the chief :—

(1) Gesticulation or expressing thoughts and emotions by bodily movements and gestures. (2) Theory and practice of music and musical instruments. (3) Adorning men and women with clothes and ornaments. (4) Knowledge of various forms, disguises, and transformations. (5) Making seats and beds ; beautifying them ; the preparation of garlands, and bouquets. (6) Games of chance as chess, dice, backgammon, draughts, etc. (7) The theory and practice of erotics. (8) Distillation and mixture of honey and various kinds of liquors and drinks. (9) Extraction of arrows and other missiles from the body ; the healing of wounds. (10) Mixing various juices and essences ; the art of cooking. (11) Horticulture and the raising and crossing of plants, flowers and fruits ; producing the above out of their season. (12) Breaking and pulverising rocks, stones and metals. (13) Extracting various drinks from the juice of the sugarcane. (14) Mixing medicinal drugs, roots, leaves and plants. (15) Mixing and analysing the above ; using them separately before mixture. (16) Extracting salts. (17) Archery and the various movements pertaining thereto.

- (18) Wrestling and boxing. (19) Projection of engines and missiles at a fixed and a moving object. (20) The marshalling of troops to the music of martial instruments. (21) Fighting from chariots or from the backs of horses, elephants and camels. (22) Propitiating the powers of nature by various postures and mystic gestures. (23) Driving the chariot ; training horses, elephants and camels in various gaits. (24) Modelling vessels from clay, wood or stone. (25) Painting. (26) Laying out reservoirs, canals, tanks, aqueducts, roads and palaces. (27) Manufacture of musical instruments, lifts and mechanical apparatus. (28) Deftly mixing colours. (29) Bringing together water, air and fire ; depriving them of their properties. (30) Building of chariots, conveyances, boats, ships and other marine craft. (31) Spinning. (32) Weaving. (33) Knowledge of gems ; boring them. (34) Assaying gold, silver and the other metals. (35) The production of artificial gold and gems. (36) Inlaying with gold and silver ; electro-plating. (37) Tanning. (38) Skinning and embalming animals. (39) Milking, churning and melting. (40) Tailoring and embroidery, (41) Swimming in lakes, rivers and the sea. (42) Cleaning houses and vessels. (43) Bleaching clothes and removing stains. (44) Shaving, cutting and dressing the hair. (45) Extracting oil from sesamum and flesh. (46) Adapting oneself to the moods and fancies of others and bringing them under our power. (47) Agriculture, its theory and practice. (48) Climbing trees. (49) Manufacture of articles with bamboo or grass. (50) Manufacture of glassware and porcelain. (51) Construction of water-lifts, suction pumps, tube-wells, sprinklers, jets, fountains, sprays, etc. (52) Manufacture of engines of war and weapons of offence and defence. (53) Saddlery for horses, elephants and camels. (54) Rearing of children, treatment of their diseases, training them in sports and games. (55) Punishment of criminals and offenders, (56) Calligraphy of various scripts,

and illuminating manuscripts. (57) Preparation and preservation of betel leaves etc.

27. *Vaxed glad* :—In fact, it was the chief object of the Lord's incarnation to fulfil the heart wishes of Dasaratha, who prayed to him long and earnestly.

The Lord comes down as Rama in every Kalpa or day of Brahma ; and Bhusunda, the yogi, is born along with him at Ayodhya. One day the child was playing in the palace, when Bhusunda hovered around, waiting upon the Lord. It stretched out its hand to catch the shining crow. Bhusunda flew aloft ; Rama's hand came after him with but two finger-breadths between. Go where the would, even to the walls of this universe, there was the hand stretched out to catch hold of him. Bhusunda lost heart, closed his eyes and opened them a moment after, when he saw himself back again at Ayodhya. He was dazed and could only stare at Rama with a vacant look ; the child clapped his hands and laughed in high glee. Bhusunda was somehow drawn into its mouth and entered its stomach, where he beheld innumerable Universes, Systems, Trinities Avatharas, Ramas, Krishnas, Devas, Asuras, and other elements of creation. Kalpas out of count did he pass there, wandering through the maze and was at last surprised to see himself standing before the child and more so to hear that he had been but an hour away in its mouth. Rama enjoyed his discomfiture hugely, removed the illusion and blessed him with an endless life—*Ramayana of Tulasi-das—Uttharakanda*.

70. 3. *Deep counsel* :—Rama resolved to make a tour of pilgrimage after his Upanayana was over. Dasaratha warmly approved of the idea ; and Rama visited the sacred shrines, the holy rivers, and the calm retreats of the earth and came back to Ayodhya. He had a very happy time of it; but all at once he withdrew from all concerns, and went

through his round of duties secular and religious, with a heavy heart and a listless mind. It was then that Rishi Viswamithra came to Dasaratha to request him to send Rama along with him, that his sacrifice might not be molested by the Rakshassas. The monarch sent for his son, who came into the audience hall with a leaden look, dragging gait, a woe-begone countenance and emaciated body. He sat not on the lap of his father as he had been used to do, but spread his cloth on the ground and dropped upon it wearily. Dasaratha, Vasishtha and Viswamithra were pained beyond all expression at the wonderful change that came over Rama. "It passes my comprehension" said Viswamithra " how it could be that Rama, who is amply endowed with every thing that could satisfy the utmost cravings of the human heart, is a prey to such melancholy and heaviness of heart." And Rama replied at length and earnestly, laying bare the hollowness, the transitoriness of mundane activities, wealth, length of life, egoism, manas, desire, childhood, youth, love, old age, time, destruction, good associations, and the like. Every eye was dim with tears; every heart grew heavy and despondent. The hosts of Siddhas that range the higher worlds exclaimed joyously " The moment draws near when our doubts, our misconceptions and our ignorance that have been the companions of our births past count, are to be dispelled and vanish into airy nothing by the reply of the Rishis, Vasishtha and Viswamithra. The sun of wisdom will dawn on the horizon of our mind." They came to Dasaratha's hall of audience and were suitably entertained by the dutiful king. "Then" said Viswamithra to Vasishtha "it seems to me that the fittest reply you can ever make to these searchings and questionings of Rama would be but the holy themes and high discourses that Brahma, the Four-faced, favoured us with, to root out for ever the enmity that existed between us and to

bring sweet peace and calm content to our hearts." And what passed between Rishi Vasishtha and Rama on that occasion is recorded in the immortal *Yoga-vasishtha*.—*Yoga-vasishtha, Vairagya-prakarana*.

- 6. *Viswamithra*:—*Vide* notes on *ch.* 65.
- 17. *Inquired* :—*Vide* notes on *V. R.* II. 100.

71-24. *Thrisanku* :—*Vide V. R.* I. 57 to 60.

72-19. *Eldest son* :—*A.R.* III. 2. includes Lakshmana in the request.

32. *The great-souled One* :—“I know this Great Being who shines beyond darkness with the radiance of countless suns.”—*Rig Veda, Purusha-sooktha*.

“I have sat at the feet of many teachers and have been initiated into the knowledge of Brahman ; I have passed through the portals of Yoga and have fathomed the mysteries of Being and Non-being. But, you are a staunch follower of the Path of Action. My dress of bark, my deer-skin, my matted hair, my simple fare of fruits, roots, leaves, water, and air proclaim me as one who has triumphed over love and hate ; but, you are steeped in the joys and pleasures of the world and are a slave to love and anger. Harmony forms the key-note of my cohsstitution ; action and passion tumultuous is the key-note of your being. Rama is to me the Great Father in whom I live and move and have my being ; but, to you he is no other than your son born to cheer your old age. My vows, my fasts and my sacrifices aim at nothing else than the eternal well-being of the universe ; but, wordly wealth, power, happiness, length of years and offspring lie at the end of your sacrifice and rites. Duty and salvation are to me the Aims of life ; but, you recognise nothing higher than wealth and happiness. It may strike you that I am supremely audacious in claiming to know That which has baffled the Vedas themselves. Well, I humbly profess to know him as the Great Being of boundless might.”

The word *this* in the Purusha-sooktha corresponds to the *real Rama*; the *Great Being* to *of invincible might*. Supreme pre-eminence and utter love are as natural to the Lord as the crown and the sceptre to the king.

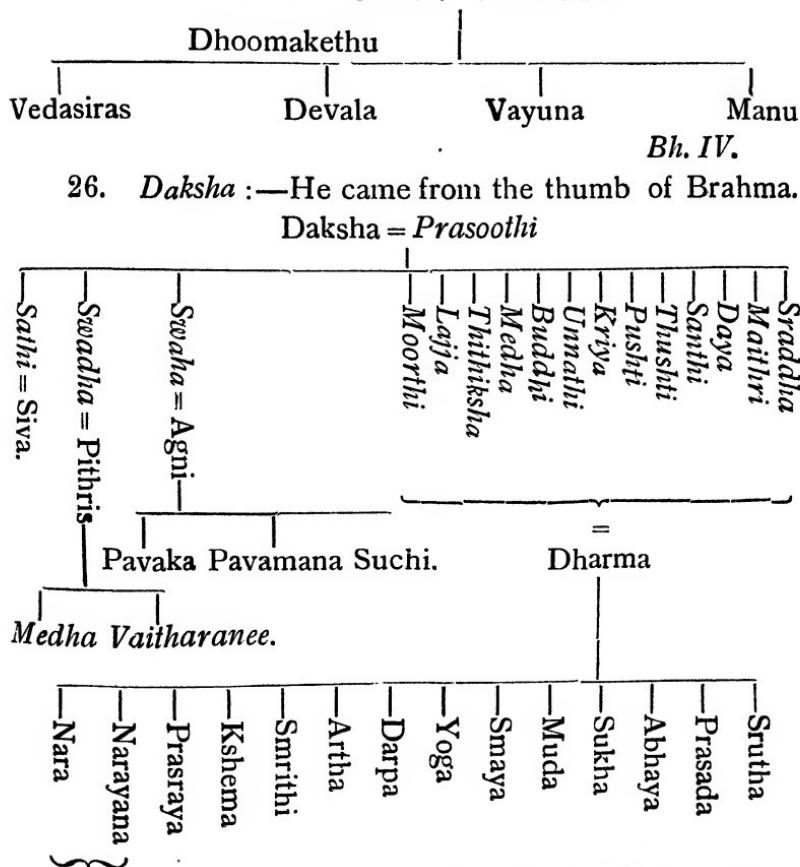
Vasishtha :—He has been the guru of your line from the days of Ikshwaku ; his heart ever seeks your good ; he was my bitter enemy for long years and has no reason to be partial to me ; he is the mind-born son of Brahma. He is the end and goal of mystic powers and wisdom. Further, I set before myself as the aim of my aspirations and efforts, nothing higher than to be recognised by him as a Brahmarishi. He instructs the world in the path of righteousness and truth, both by precept and example. But, you might say, “ He is sure to pronounce in your favour, agreeably to the rule of conduct laid down in the Smritis—when there is a point in dispute between a Brahmana and one of another caste, the scale should weigh heavy in favour of the Brahmana.” Well, then, seek the opinion of these sages and hermits, who seek not the favour of kings or emperors ; whose souls own no superior ; these are utterly selfless ; these have no likes or dislikes. “ The wise ones have fathomed the origin of the Great Self ” says the Purusha Sooktha; and to these the divine incarnation has few mysteries. The world-teachers go from among these. Vamadeva, who reached the height of perfection even before he left his mother’s womb, Markandeya, whose life-period counts seven Days of Brahma—would you take the words of such as these, souls ever centred in meditation on the supreme, if they advise you that it is to your good ?—*Thanisloki*.

74. 7. *In his early teens* :—Rama was then but twelve, for Mareecha affirms “ He was but a lad of twelve, with no knowledge of arms.” Dasaratha’s expression, that he was not yet sixteen, refers to the age when Kshathriyas are entitled to put on armour and fight.

Lotus leaves—They blossom and look charming only in the sunlight; but, they close and fade when the sun sets. So, Rama, of tender years and brought up in the luxury of a palace, would fall asleep when the sun sinks behind the west ; but, the Rakshasas grow in strength and vigour as the night advances.

75. 21. *Mareecha* :—Vide ante note on “Kasyapa.”
 78. 18. *Bhrisaswa* :—A Rishi.

Archi = *Bhrisaswa*, = *Dhishana*



(N.B.) This was during the Swayambhuva Manvantara; but, owing to his offence against Siva, he was born again in the Chakshusha Manvantara as the son of the Prache-

thasas and Marisha, the daughter of Rishi Kandu and the Apsarasa Pramlocha.

Daksha=Asikni.

10,000 Haryaswas.	60 Daughters.	1000 Sabalaswas
-------------------	---------------	-----------------

(N. B.) 10 were married to Dharma, 2 to Bhootha, 2 to Angiras, 2 to Krisaswa, 4 to Tharksha, 27 to Soma, and 13 to Kasyapa. *Bh. IV.*

80. 4. *Protective rites*.—Vide V. R. II. 25.

The mantras beginning with *Swasthi nu mimeetham—Go.*

Episodes that teach the wisdom of Brahman as found in the Yogavasishtha—*Thilaka*.

10. *Blessings* :—When Drona sent his pupil Duryodhana to fight, he sipped water, recited some mantras and gave him an armour to put on that he might be safe from the weapons of Arjuna. “ May Brahma, the Brahmanas and the best of the reptiles secure your safety. May Yayathi, Nahusha, Dundhumara, Bhageeratha and other Rajarshis bring you happiness. May the one-footed, the many-footed, and the footless creatures watch over your safety. May Swaha, Swadha, Sachi, Lakshmi and Arundhati bestow prosperity upon you. May Asitha, Devala, Viswamithra, Angiras, Vasishtha and Kasyapa give you their protection. May Dhatha, Vidhatha, the quarters and their rulers and the Karthikeyas ever labour for your good. May Soorya, Yama, the elephants that support the earth, the sky, the goddess of the earth, the planets and the Siddhas ever give you joy and victory—*M. B. Dronaparva 94.*

15. It was autumn when Rama went along with Viswamithra—*Bhatti-kavya*.

Garuda came to Rama and gave him the bow of Vishnu and three asthras—*Padma-purana*. These were intended to destroy Thataka and Subahu and to plunge Mareechha into

the ocean waters—a task beyond the power of ordinary asthras.

81. 2. *Skanda and Visakha* :—" Then the Lord manifested himself as Skanda, Visakha, Naigamesha and Saka. These are the sons of Fire." —*M. B.*

7. *Bala and Athibala* :—The mystic arts known as Jaya and Vijaya—*Bhatti-kavya*.

Viswamithra initiated Rama and his brother into the mysteries of the Maheswara Vidya, the mysteries connected with the use and management of the bow, the asthras, chariots, elephants, horses and missiles, the manthras used in shooting and recalling asthras, as also the manthras Bala and Athibala that ward off hunger and thirst, fatigue and weariness.—*A. R. III. 4.*

The Virat-purusha is the Rishi of the manthras Bala and Athibala; Gayathri is their Devatha and metre; the letters A U and M form the seed ; they are used to ward off hunger and thirst, fatigue and weariness ; the Anganyasa and the Karanyasa are performed with the permutations of *Klam* ; the dhyana (meditation) on the form of the Devatha to be invoked is as follows :—"I meditate upon the presiding deities of the Vidyas, Bala and Athibala. They are but modifications of Pranava ; they shine with the resplendence of the sun ; they form the essence of all the Vedas ; their splendour is beyond description ; they are proficient in destroying the foes and depriving them of their energy ; the waters of immortality ever drop from their hands ; they infuse life and energy into all beings." (For further details and for the manthra itself, the Savithri Upanishad may be profitably consulted, as also Rig Veda, III. iii. 21, 23).

5. *Sarayoo* :—In a previous Kritha-yuga, Sankha the Asura made away with the Vedas, threw them into the ocean and vanished therein. The Lord went after him as

a fish, destroyed him and restored the Vedas to Brahma. Then, tears of joy fell from the eyes of the Lord on the top of the Himalayas. From there it flowed on to the Bindu lake and thence to the Manasa lake. About that time Manu Vaivaswatha desired to perform a yaga and said to his guru "Holy sir! This Ayodhya abounds in every convenience. Do you approve of it as a suitable place for the sacrifice?" To which the sage replied "But here is neither a sacred river nor a holy lake. If you can get down from lake Manasa a holy current, that would cleanse every foul stain and sin." Vaivaswatha shot an arrow that pierced a side of the lake and directed a current of water to where Ayodhya stood. It was aptly named Sarayoo in that it flowed *from the lake*. Later on, the 60,000 sons of Sagara were reduced to ashes by the fiery glance of Kapila; and Bhageeratha brought down Ganga from the worlds of the Gods and united it with Sarayoo—*A. R. Yauthra-kanda IV.*

84. 29. *The spot* :—Some puranas mention this incident as having happened at Mount Kailasa in the Himalayas; it might have been in other Kalpas. Kalidasa's poem —*Kumara-sambhava*, is founded upon this incident.

87. 16. *Malada and Karoosha*. "The right bank of the Ganges from the confluence of the Gomati to the confluence of the Sona, in shorter words, the district of Shahabad, seems to have been formerly peopled by the Maladas (or Malajas) and Karooshas, who were also called 'Vrihadguhas or living in big caves (*Hemachandra IV. 25. Trikanda-sesha, Bhoomi-varga*). This seems to show they were aboriginal tribes, in which case they must have retired to the hills of Chota Nagpur on the south and are perhaps identifiable with some of the tribes inhabiting that tract. Rama, after crossing the confluence of the Sarayoo, passed through the land of these tribes on

his journey to Mithila and both the peoples are also mentioned in the Mahabharata II. 14. 12. The king of the Karooshas was an ally of Jarasandha, king of Magadha, in his celebrated siege of Mathura (*Harivamsa* 91) and the district seems to have been afterwards merged in the latter kingdom. According to the Ramayana, it contained the holy hermitage of Vamana or dwarf incarnation of Vishnu—which was afterwards occupied by Vismamithra.”—*Geography of Ancient India*.

20. *The Asura Vrithra* :—Indra had a long spell of happiness, security and success. He grew proud of his position and showed not meet reverence to Brihaspathi, his guru, when he came into the hall of audience. The sage saw that evil days were coming upon Indra and silently left the Swarga. The Asuras took advantage of the opportunity to humiliate the Devas. Sukra their guru, led them on ; the Devas were worsted in fight and sought refuge with Brahma. “Accept the guidance of Visvaroopa, son of Thwashta” was his reply to their prayers. They were fortunate in securing his services and Indra was instructed by him in the mysteries of the Narayana-kavacha (a protective manthra). With its help he easily conquered the Asuras and established himself firmly in his kingdom.

Now, Visvaroopa had three mouths—one to drink soma, another to drink wine and a third to eat his food. While he was performing Yagas for the Devas, he allowed them to participate in the offerings therein. But the essence of it he gave to his kin, the Asuras, unperceived (for they were his mother’s people). Indra found him out and furious at such treachery in one whom he trusted so absolutely, he cut off the heads of Visvaroopa with his Vajra. The soma-drinking head became the Chathaka (the swallow); the liquor-imbibing head became the Thtithiri (the partridge). Then the sin of killing a Brahmana attached itself

to Indra. He divided it into equal parts and distributed them among earth, water, trees and women.—*Bh.* VI. 7 to 8 V. R. IV. 24 ; VII. 84—86 ; *Padmapurana*, *Srishti-khanda* 19, 71 ; *Bhoomi-khanda* 23, 24 : *Brahmapurana* 96. (This story is repeated with further details in the *Krishna Yajur Veda*).

Thwashta was enraged at the murder of his son. He performed a magical rite to destroy Indra. But when making the principal offering, he chanced to pronounce the manthra of invocation with a wrong accent on the principal word. This gave the meaning “Grow in energy as he whose mortal foe is Indra.” He meant it to convey the idea “Grow thou in energy as the mortal foe of Indra.” This oversight vitiated the whole rite. A frightful Asura rose out of the sacrificial fire. The Devas discharged their weapons at him, but he swallowed them all. They took refuge with Vishnu, who advised them to go to Rishi Dhadheechi and beg his body of him ; Visvakarma would manufacture out of his vertebrae a weapon which would slay the huge Asura Vrithra. The Devas accordingly sought Dhadheechi and obtained his body, with which Visvakarma made the terrible weapon named Vajra. [Misrikh is a town in Sitapur District, Oudh, and the head quarters of Misrikh tahsil, situated 13 miles south of Sitapur town on the Hardoi and Sitapur Road. It is one of the most ancient towns in Oudh and numerous legends connect its foundation with the mythological Raja Dadhich. The name is said to be derived from the Sanskrit *misrita*, meaning ‘mixed’, because the waters of all the holy places in India are supposed to have been brought together and mixed in the tank mentioned below.

Colonel Sleeman says : “ Misrikh is celebrated as the residence of a very holy sage named Dadhich. In a great battle between the Devathas and the Giants, the Devathas

were defeated. They went to implore the aid of Brahma upon his snowy mountain-top. He told them to go to Misrikh and arm themselves with the bones of the old sage Dadhich. They found the sage alive and in excellent health; but they thought it their duty to explain to him their orders. He told them that he should be proud to have his bones used as arms in so holy a cause ; but, he had unfortunately vowed to bathe at all the sacred shrines in India before he died, and must perform his vow. Grievously perplexed, the Devathas submitted their case to Indra. Indra consulted his chaplain Brihaspathi, who told him that the angels of all the holy shrines in India had been established at and around Nimsar by Brhma himself and the Devathas had only to take water from all the sacred places over which they presided and pour it over the old sage to get both him and themselves out of the dilemma. They did so and the old sage, expressing himself satisfied, gave up his life. The Devathas armed themselves with his bones, attacked the giants, and gained an easy and complete victory."

The tank above-mentioned is of very ancient construction. The Maharatta princes repaired the ghats about 125 years ago, and it is now a fine specimen of a Hindu tank. On its bank stands an old temple sacred to Raja Dadhich, who is also considered a Rishi. A large fair is held near the tank on the occasion of Holi festival, at which a brisk trade is carried on.

There is a *serai* for travellers, and the Brahmans entertain all strangers. Sitapur is 55 miles from Lucknow by Rohilkhand and Kumaon Railway.—*The Travellers' Companion*].

Indra placed himself at the head of the Devas and went to fight Vrithra with the newly-forged weapon. The encounter took place at the commencement of the

Thretha-yuga of the first Chathur-yuga in the present Vaivaswatha Manvanthara. The banks of the Narmada was the scene of a long and well-matched contest. The chances were rather favourable to the Devas. The Daithya and Danava chiefs began to show signs of wavering. "What is this that I see, my friends?" exclaimed Vrithra "Is not death inevitable? And what is more enviable than meeting it with honour and glory? The holy books say that there are two modes of reaching the highest heavens—the first by means of Yoga and the second by fighting to the last in the field of battle with our face grimly set towards the foe." But the Asuras heeded him not; the Devas pursued them. "Cowards!" exclaimed Vrithra "What glory do you gain by attacking those who flee in fear from the field of battle? Come at me; come one; come all; you will find that you have enough to occupy yourselves with." He sprang at Indra, who threw a large club at him. Vrithra easily caught it with his left hand and dashed it against the head of Airavatha, the elephant of Indra. It receded 28 cubits and vomited torrents of blood. The magnanimous Vrithra was touched with the distress of the animal and did not strike it again. He turned against Indra and calling to mind his wicked deeds, exclaimed "Vile assassin of a Brahmana! You killed in cold blood and by treachery your guru Visvaroopa. You made him confide in you; you were initiated by him into the mysteries of arms; yet you cruelly put to death my innocent brother. You are worse than a Rakshasa. I shall see if I cannot cleave thy body with this trident and make you food for vultures. If I fall by your hand, I shall be free from the bonds of Karma by offering my body as a welcome sacrifice to animals. Here do I stand before you, serene and unflinching. Why do you not strike at me with your Vajra? You have been helped by Vishnu and Dadheechi. Victory

and everything good goes with those that follow Vishnu. I carry out the commands of him whom I worship—the Lord Sankarshana. I will sacrifice this body and attain the world of the most exalted Yogis. Lord ! May I for all time remain in the service of thy elect. The attainment of the supreme state or of the Siddhis or of Mukthi is of no moment to me when compared to the service of humanity."

He then attacked Indra with his trident ; but Indra threw his Vajra at him and lopped off the hand and shivered the weapon it held. Vrithra took a club with the other and struck Indra and his elephant. The Vajra slipped out of the hands of the monarch of the Devas and he felt ashamed to pick it up while his enemy was looking on. "Pick it up, Indra and kill your enemy. This is no time for shame or sorrow. Neither you nor I are the real actors in this play. The Lord guides us all. Look at me. I have been worsted ; my hand is gone and my weapon ; but I am doing my very best to kill you. It is but a game of dice that we play, with our lives as the stakes ". Indra could not admire enough the wisdom and the magnanimity of the Asura and involuntarily exclaimed " King of Danavas ! You have got over the illusion of Vishnu ; the Asura nature has dropped away from you; your heart is centred in devotion to the Lord. Verily you are a Mahathma." They renewed the fight and Indra lopped off the other hand and shattered the club it held, whereupon Vrithra opened his mouth and swallowed him. The Devas were loud in their wailings and lamentations ; but, Indra broke through the body of Vrithra with his Vajra, and tried to sever the head of his foe with it. Day and night he was at it without a moment's respite for 360 days before he could accomplish his task. The Jeevathma of Vrithra rose from his body and merged into Sankarshana, while the Devas and the Asuras looked on in wonder. The heinous sin of murdering a Brahmana caught

Indra in its deadly coils and followed him as an old Chandala woman of grisly appearance. He fled to the Manasa lake and remained concealed in the filament of a lotus stalk for 1000 years. King Nahusha reigned in Swarga the while; but, his heart grew big with pride and the Saptharshis cursed him to be a serpent. The Brahmanas purified Indra of his stain and called him back to rule over the world of the gods—*Ib.* IX—XIII.

Thwashta brought forth Visvaroopa to destroy Indra. The latter desired to make himself the master of the three worlds. With one of his faces he studied the Vedas ; with another he drank wine ; and with the third he looked out as if he would swallow the quarters and the worlds. Indra was afraid of his stern thapas and sent his Apsarasas to spoil it, but in vain. He next hurled his Vajra at the Asura, who fell down to the earth like the loosened summit of a mountain. But his splendour diminished not. He seemed more alive than ever and was fearful to behold.

Indra knew not what to do, and remained plunged in thought. Then there came along a wood-cutter with an axe on his shoulder, whom espying, Indra approached and said “Do you lop off the heads of this my enemy as quickly as you can”? But the man replied “It is no ordinary person that I see before me. My axe cannot sever the heads from the huge shoulders; and even if it could, I cannot bring myself to do a thing which the world will hold in horror and loathing.” “Nay” said Indra “fear not. I have power to put in your axe the strength and energy of Vajra.” “But” exclaimed the stranger “I must know who you are and why you have perpetrated this cruel deed.” To whom Indra replied “I am Sakra, the King of the Gods. Will you obey me now?” “Alas!” cried the man “How is it that you are not ashamed of this dark crime ? Have you no fear that the terrible

penalty of taking the life of a Brahmana, a holy Rishi, will fall upon you?" "That is my own concern" replied Indra "I will purify myself by the severest penances. He was my enemy, terrible in his strength. My Vajra laid him low. I stood in mortal fear of him. So, do me the favour to cut his heads off as quickly as you can. The heads of the beasts slaughtered in sacrifices shall be yours henceforth, as a fit reward for the timely help you render me." The woodcutter was persuaded by the promises of Indra and quickly cut away the heads of Visvaroopa with his axe.

In the fight between Indra and Vrithra, the latter swallowed his foe. The gods then created a yawn which seized Vrithra in its grasp. His limbs contracted and from the open mouth of the Asura came Indra, glad to be alive. They renewed the fight and the spirit of Thwashta was so strong that Indra was worsted and sought refuge with Vishnu. "Try your best" said the Lord "to bring about a peace with your enemy. I will ensoul the Vajra and destroy the Asura." Then the Devas and the Rishis proceeded to where Vrithra was and unfolded to him their proposals for a cessation of hostilities. But Vrithra replied "How can there be any peace between myself and Sakra? We are both of immeasurable might. Yet, I shall not fail to pay due respect to your words if you promise that I shall not meet my death at the hands of Indra or of his gods by a dry object or by a wet one, by stone, by wood, by a weapon, by a missile, nor during day, nor during night." The Rishis got Indra to consent to the terms and there was peace between the combatants. But, Indra was ever on the look out for some means of destroying his foe.

One evening he saw Vrithra walking all alone on the sea beach. He followed him unseen and said to himself "Verily this is an awful moment. The Lord has promised to infuse his energy into my Vajra. It is now evening;

it is neither day nor night. If I do not slay mine enemy now, I shall never get such another chance to do it." He invoked the Lord Vishnu and prayed to him with all his might; when, lo ! he saw coming out of the sea a cloud of foam high as a mountain. "I see the hand of the Lord in this" exclaimed Indra in exultation, "This is neither dry nor wet. This is neither a weapon nor a missile. This shall I use to slay Vrithra with." He caught the foam and threw it at him along with his Vajra ; Vishnu entered the foam and absorbed the life breaths of Vrithra.—*M. B. Udyoga-parva* 9-19.

Once upon a time, the Asura Namuchi was afraid of Indra and hid himself in the rays of the Sun. Indra entered into a covenant with his foe and said "I shall not slay you in the day or in the night, with a wet object nor yet with a dry one." But, one day he chanced to observe a fog covering the sky and taking care to be well within the terms of the peace, he struck at Namuchi with a piece of foam and slew him on the spot. But, the huge head of the Asura chased him, shouting out "Thou traitor to a friend ! Sinful wretch ! Whither goest thou ?" Indra was persecuted day and night beyond endurance and sought refuge with Brahma, who advised him to bathe at the Aruna-theertha and purge himself of the foul sin. He bathed at the junction of the Sarasvathi and the Aruna ; he gave away vast gifts to holy Brahmanas ; he performed many a sacrifice there. The head of Namuchi fell in that confluence of waters ; and Vrithra ascended to the worlds of the blessed—*Ib. Salya-parva* : 44.

Vrithra confounded Indra, his foe, with his arts of illusion; Brihaspathi, Vasishtha and the other Rishis grew anxious about the well-being of the worlds. They went to Maha-deva and said "Lord ! Indra finds it almost impossible to slay Vrithra. We pray that you will be pleased to do it yourself." Sankara directed his energy to enter into

the body of Vrithra as a raging fever and placed another portion of it in Indra. Maha-Vishnu placed a ray of his in the Vajra wielded by Indra. The Asuras lost their memory ; their arts of illusion slipped away from them ; fierce flames darted out of Vrithra's mouth ; his face grew ghastly white ; he trembled like an aspen ; his hair stood on end with an unknown terror ; his breath came in short painful gasps ; his memory came out of his body in the guise of a hideous jackal ; frightful meteors fell all round him ; vultures, eagles, cranes and other birds of prey circled over his head ; Maheswara's fever dried the life-sap from his limbs ; he heaved a huge yawn and Indra struck him dead with his Vajra. The sin of the murder of a Brahmana came out of Vrithra's body as a frightful monster clad in rags and bark ; fiery were his eyes and curved his cruel teeth ; his limbs were curiously twisted and distorted and were drenched with blood ; a garland of skulls hung round his neck. He sprang upon Indra and folded him within his loathsome embrace. The Devas cried out to Brahma in sorrow and trepidation. The Fashioner of forms sent for the grisly Nemesis and said " Let Indra go. You shall have your wish." And he replied with a hideous leer, "Honoured am I beyond all expectations, in that the Great Architect has a favour to ask of me. What higher honour or glory can I wish for? But, I simply carried out your behests that I should pursue relentlessly him who took the life of a Brahmana. I shall no longer trouble Indra; but, I would pray that you assign me another abode." Then Brahma sent for Agni, the god of fire and said " My son ! Accept thou a fourth of this." " Be it so" replied Agni. " but, how am I to purify myself of it?" " That need not trouble you." said Brahma " for, he who catches a sight of you blazing in your splendour and fails to make an offering unto you, shall relieve you of this heinous sin." Brahma next sent for the trees, the

plants and the creepers and said to them "Accept you a fourth of this sin." "Be it so." they replied "But is it not enough that we lead a dog's life, helplessly exposed to the mercies of heat and cold, wind and rain, man and beast ? They cut us down, pierce us, hack at us, break us, burn us and subject us to endless tortures. But, your word is law to us. How shall we throw it off ?" "He who interferes with you in any way on the full and new moon days shall relieve you of your burden." He next sent for the Apsarasas and said "Accept a fourth of the Brahminicide of Indra." "We obey" replied they ; "but how long are we to carry this black horror about us?" "Grieve not." said he "It shall go to him who approaches a woman during her courses." Then Brahma sent for the waters and said "Accept a fourth of the Brahminicide of Indra." "We feel honored at the command" replied they ; "but instruct us how we are to throw it off." Nothing easier" said Brahma; "it shall go away from you to those who shall slight you and throw into you impure things, excreta, hair, nails and the like." Then the Devas helped Indra to perform a horse-sacrifice and freed him from the sin—*Ib. Santhi-parva*, 288.

Hiranyakasipu went to his sister and said "Dear ! your son Visvaroopa is now the chaplain of the Devas. He gives to them the essence of the offerings and we get only the remains. We grow weaker and weaker ; they wax in strength. Advise him to manage it the other way." She went to Visvaroopa where he sat in the garden Nandana and said "Child ! I hear that you help our enemies to grow and famish your uncle and his people in consequence. It seems to me all unbecoming for a son of mine." Now, Visvaroopa was the most dutiful of sons. He idolised his mother and her word was law to him. So, he went over to the Asuras. Hiranyakasipu put away Vasishtha who was till then his priest and installed Visvaroopa in

his place. The Maharshi put a curse upon him. "Asura ! I see no reason for your changing the Purohithas in the middle of this sacrifice, unless it were distrust of myself. You shall not live to finish this rite and shall mee. your death through a strange monster." And Maha-Vishnu tore him to pieces in the guise of a man-lion. Visvaroopa performed severe tapas that his mother's people may prosper. Indra sent many an Apsarasas to ruin it, who soon had the innocent Asura in their toils. When they were satisfied with their hellish work, they said to him all innocently "We belong to Indra and cannot afford to stay here long. Give us leave to go back to our homes." But Visvaroopa cried out "Is it so ? I will make short work of Indra and his Devas." He recited some potent charms, which immeasurably increased his might. With one of his faces he drank the Soma juice offered by the Brahmanas ; with another he partook of the food offered therein ; the third absorbed the vital energy of the Devas. They went to Brahma, clasped his feet and cried in despair "Lord ! Visvaroopa absorbs the essence of us all and of everything that is offered to us in the sacrifices. Our hearts turn to water, while the Asuras chase us round the heavens. We throw ourselves upon your mercy." Brahma reflected a while and said "Dadheechi, of the race of Bhrigu, is practising stern thapas for the good of the worlds. Pray to him to give up his body unto you. Its bones can be utilised to form a terrible weapon—the Vajra, with which you shall slay the Asura," The Devas proffered their prayer to the Rishi Dadheechi. "Holy Sir ! we hope and pray that your thapas goes on all right." "Yes, thank you ?" he replied "I am yours to command. What can I do for you?" "Blessed are we" rejoined the Devas "in that you have thought us fit recipients of your favour. May we make bold to entreat of you to give up your holy body for the good of the worlds." "I see nothing against it" said

Dadheechee "but, you must consent to have me as your Indra for a thousand years." Indra resigned in his favour and betook himself to thapas. At the end of the 1,000 years Dadheechee gave up his body to the Devas. It was nothing unusual for him to whom joy and sorrow were equal and who lived but for others. Brahma manufactured the terrible Vajra out of his bones ; and Vishnu infused his energy into it. In consequence Indra struck Visvaroopa dead with the bolt. Thwashta, the father of the victim, gave him the head of the animal slain in sacrifices, and churned his body, from which sprang the Asura Vrithra. But, he too fell under the Vajra of Indra—Ib. *Santhi-parva* 352 ; *Vana-parva* 99, 100.

Of yore, the Asura Vrithra entered the Earth and absorbed its life, whereupon evil odours rose up on all sides. Indra grew wroth and struck him with his Vajra. Vrithra, sorely wounded, entered the Waters and absorbed their life, whereupon they lost their properties. Indra grew wroth and struck him with his Vajra once again. The Asura entered the Fire and absorbed its life, whereupon it lost form, colour and heat. Indra grew wroth and struck him with his Vajra once again. The Asura entered the Air and absorbed its life, whereupon it lost its property of touch. Indra grew wroth and struck him with his Vajra once again. The Asura entered the Akasa and absorbed its life, whereupon it lost its property of sound. Indra grew wroth and struck him with his Vajra once again. The Asura entered the body of Indra and absorbed his life, whereupon he lost his natural qualities. Confusion and darkness took hold of him. Rishi Vasishtha dispelled them with his teachings and holy discourses, whereafter he destroyed the Asura in his body with the subtle Vajra—Ib. *Aswamedha-parva* 11.

88. 4. *Thataka* :—She was an Apsaras in a former

birth. One day she came upon a Rishi in the forest and frightened him as a hideous Rakshasi. He saw into her future and pronounced her fate in the form of a curse, "You shall be a Rakshasi. The shaft of Sree Rama shall rid you of this dark doom." Accordingly she rose from her foul body, pierced to the heart by the arrow of Rama and rose aloft to the high regions in her glorious body of light—*A. R. IV. 8.*

21. *Met his fate* :—Sunda laid waste the asrama of Agasthya and in consequence, was consumed to ashes by his holy wrath. Then Thataka and her sons Mareecha and Subahu proceeded to the nether worlds and lived with Sumali, the Rakshasa king. Long after, when Ravana rose to power, they attached themselves to him.—*Kamba Ramayana*.

90. 14. *Manthara* :—The Kamba Ramayana gives her name as Kumathi. Except this, I have not been able to find any explanation of this allusion.

17. *Destroyed* :—Vide *ante*, note on 'The incarnation of Rama' pp. 227.

92. 35. *Gave up* :—The weapon of the Lord freed her from her curse ; she came out of it as a most lovely Yaksha woman, who reverently went round Rama and sang his glories. She had a place in the worlds of light—*Adh. R. IV.*

93. 21. *Chaithraratha* :—The lovely gardens of Kubera, the lord of wealth.

94. 12. Dandachakra, Dharmachakra, and Kalachakra are asthras—*Thilaka*. The clubs are asthras no named—*Thilaka*, as also the two thunderbolts. *Prasvapana* :—locks up the senses and faculties of those against whom it is sent; *Prasamana* deprives them of their fiery energy; *Darpana* maddens them; *Soshana* dries up the sap in their limbs; *Santhapana* pours a liquid fire, as it were, through all their

veins; *Vilapana* causes them hopeless melancholy and dissolves them in tears ; *Madana* is the weapon of the God of Love.

95. 5. *Sudamana*, the weapon of Thwashta.

13. *Initiated*—Tulasidas Ramayana, Balakanda, mentions the incident as having happened after they came to Siddhasrama.

23. *Pleased heart*—They felt themselves supremely blessed in being allowed to approach and serve him from whom they derived their life and energy—*Thilaka*.

96.6. *Withdrawal*—The mantra is contained in the Moola-mantra of the asthra.

10. *Sathyavan* etc. *Govindnraja* is of opinion that these are the names of the forces presiding over the mantras, while *Thilak amakes* is out that Visvamithra taught him the withdrawals, as also other asthras named Sathyavan etc.

21. The Grantha editions omits from Dasaksha to Sunabhaka (both inclusive) ; but the Devanagari edition published at Kumbakonam has them.

Yogandhara :—Other editions read ‘Suchirbahu, Mahabahu, Nishkuli and Viruchi.’

98. 1. This chapter teaches us that we should always live in the holy spots sanctified by the Lord ; all our efforts towards the realization of the higher states of spirituality are infinitely fruitful in such places through the eternal presence of the Lord therein.

9. *Siddhasrama* :—It is also called Daruvana and Badarikasrama. The Lord Vishnu sits there in meditation, ever intent on the welfare of the worlds.—*Kamba Ramayana*. Vishnu performed Thapas there in his own form, and later on as Vamana ; hence the peculiar sanctity of the place.—*Go.*

10. *Bali* :—He was the son of Virochana and grandson of Prahlada. Once upon a time he was defeated by

Indra and was advised by his guru Sukra to perform a yagna named *Visvajith* (all-conquering.) A chariot drawn by green horses, a flag with the device of a lion on it, a golden bow, two quivers with an unfailing supply of arrows and a divine armour arose from the sacrificial fire. Prahlada gave him a garland that fades not and Sukra bestowed on him a wonderful conch. Equipped thus, he attacked Swarga and the Devas. Brihaspathi, their guru, told Indra that it was a bad time for them and Vishnu alone had power to pull them through it. They should give in for a while and lie low somewhere, till the wheel of Time should bring up better chances for them. The Devas were wise enough to follow the advice and Bali and his Asuras ruled over the three worlds. Sukra advised the Asura king to perform a hundred Aswamedhas.

Aditi became disconsolate at the downfall of her sons. She asked her husband Kasyapa to help them anyhow. He advised her to observe a strict vow named Payovratha. At the end of twelve days the Lord Vishnu appeared before her and she had his promise that He would incarnate as her son. Accordingly Sree Vamana was born of Aditi at midnoon, on the twelfth day of the bright fortnight, in the month of Bhadrapada ; the moon was in the first part of Sravana, in the Abhijit. Vamana came to know that Bali was celebrating the Aswamedha on the banks of the Narmada.

[*Balighatam*-A village in the Vizagapatam District Madras Presidency, near which is a shrine of Siva as Brahmeswarudu, of peculiar sanctity. The Swami or idol, contrary to usual custom, faces west instead of east. The river Panderu or Varahanadi, which washes the rocks on which the temple stands, flows for some distance from south to north. This combination of directions is particularly auspicious in the estimation of Hindus, and the shrine, under the name of Utthara-vahini, is held in great veneration. On the river bank is a

small bed of pulverized shale, which, from its resemblance to ashes, is declared by the priests to be the site of a sacrifice performed by Bali-chakravarthi. It is 23 miles from Narasapatham on the north-east line of the Madras Railway.—

Traveller's Companion.

He went there and was accorded the highest respect and reverence by Bali.

“Holy Sir ! To what good fortune do I owe this gracious visit. I am yours to command.”

“Nay, king of Asuras ! No favour to you ; it is I that seek one at your hands. I am a Brahmana and it goes easy with me to beg.”

“Holy Sir ! I have made a vow that none shall seek of me in vain that which is mine to give. You have but to speak to be obeyed.”

“Nay, your majesty ! I but ask for as much space as my dwarfed feet can cover thrice.”

“Ho ! Ho ! You are too modest. I will have you remember that Bali is not so poor but he can afford to give something more to a deserving Brahmana like yourself, something more befitting his position.”

“Nay, king ! It is not meet that a Brahmana should desire for more than he could have use for ; he should be content with as little as possible.”

“It is really very amusing. Since you will have it so, I can do no better than beg of you to accept from me as much space of earth as you could cover in three strides.” He took the water-pot to pour water over the hands of the recipient to consecrate the gift. Now, Sukra knew what was coming on, and whispered into his ears “You know not what you are about. This dwarf is but Vishnu in disguise, the warm supporter of our enemies, the Devas. Have you any idea of his object in making that modest request of you for three feet of earth ? You will see

him cover the Bhoo-loka and the Bhuvan-loka with his first stride ; the Swar-loka will afford space for the second. Now what have you to give for his third stride to measure ? Where can you remain after giving over all you have ? Besides, you will go to hell for having failed in your promise and uttered an untruth. So, take heed and commit yourself not to anything rash. I would be the last man to advise you to speak an untruth ; but, this is an extreme case, and the Vedas make special allowance for such." But, Bali put away from him with scorn and indignation such a disgraceful expedient. "The grandson of Prahlada shall never soil himself and his ancestry by an untruth. I have promised to this young Brahmana as much land as he could measure in three strides ; and *that he shall have*. It matters very little to me whether he be a Brahmana or the Lord Vishnu himself or my Fate." "Well" said Sukra in anger and sorrow "you know that I advise you for your best. Since you will not take it, you will lose everything you have."

But Bali was firm as a rock. He rendered due worship to the Brahmana boy and pronounced the manthra of gift joyfully, clearly and with a full heart. Vindhyaivali, his wife, placed before him a golden jug full of holy water, with which he washed the feet of Vamana and sprinkled the sin-cleansing water over himself and his wife. Thereupon the dwarf of a Brahmana grew and grew till he filled the whole of the universe with his mighty form. The three words afforded him scant measure for two strides, which passed right beyond and through Mahar-loka, Jana-loka, Thapo-loka, and Sathyloka. The Asuras were overwhelmed with fear and sorrow and exclaimed "Alas ! Our noble king has been miserably duped by this villain of a Brahmana, this unprincipled Vishnu. It is but righteous work that we would do in ridding the worlds of

such a cheat." They fell upon the followers of Vishnu, who just handled them as if they were children. Bali interfered and ordered them to desist. "For" said he "Time is against us. The Lord is Time ; He was on our side and we won ; He is now against us and the Devas are bound to win." Garuda, divining the intentions of the Lord, tied Bali with the potent noose of Varuna.

"King of the Auras" said Sree Vamana "all that you can give suffices not two strides of mine. Where shall I place my third ? You have told a lie. You have gone back on your plighted word to a Brahmana. The gates of hell open wide to receive you." "Nay, Lord!" replied Bali "It shall never be said that my feet strayed from the path of right. My word holds good now as ever. Do you place your feet on my head and take out your third foot of earth. The hell that you speak of, the noose of Varuna that binds me, the downfall of my fortunes, and any punishment you may inflict on me, would not turn a hair of mine ; but, I dread above all to do anything for which good men will blame me. I deem this punishment an act of favor shown me out of consideration for my grand-father Prahlada. This royal power has but clouded my perception and made me forget the true aims of life. And what shall I do with this body of mine ? They say you are my enemy ; but, I have lost my kingdom and my power only to be drawn nearer to you."

Prahlada came there and bowed down to Sree Vamana and said "Bali obtained his lordship over the Thriloki by your grace ; and now you have taken it from him, since it stood in his way and blinded him to his real good."

Vindhyaivali, the wife of Bali, clasped her hands and said "Lord ! You are the Creator of the universe, the Preserver, and the Destroyer. It is yours by right, and it is the height of presumption for any one to pretend to give it to you as a gift."

Brahma approached Sree Vamana and said " Lord of Lords ! All-pervading ! You have taken away from Bali every thing that he held dear. He has given himself up entirely to you and feels supremely blessed in doing so. It is not meet that he should remain bound by the noose of Varuna, as if he were an ignorant soul."

Sree Vamana replied " Nay, it is not so. I take away all his wealth from him whom I mean to bless with my grace. Riches and power but induce a man to disregard myself and the world. When, after countless births, the jeeva evolves to be a man and when he is found to be free from any pride of birth, age, beauty, wisdom, power and wealth, he has won my favour. Constant devotion to me keeps him from anything that might beget pride in him. Now, this Bali has triumphed over my Maya. His wealth is gone; his power is lost; he is defeated and chained by his foes; he is forsaken by his friends ; his own guru reviles and curses him. But, his hold on truth is stronger for it. He shall have as his reward a dignity beyond the dreams of others. He will be the Indra during the Savarni-manvanthara. Till then, he will reside in the Suthala. Bodily pain nor mental, nor fatigue nor indolence, nor defeat nor misfortune shall approach the dwellers of his world. King of the Asuras ! Go to Suthala with thy followers. The dwellers in Swarga ever pray to be admitted to it. The very Regents of the worlds shall not be able to overpower you. My Chakra shall consume to ashes him who refuses to follow you there. You and your people are under my protection. Myself shall wait at your door and keep watch and ward over you. There you shall be purified of what remains in you of the Asuric tendencies. And you, Prahlada, will accompany Bali to his new abode."—*Bh.* VIII. 15-23.

Rishi Bharadwaja was one day meditating in the waters of the heavenly Ganga, when the foot of Vishnu appeared

there during his Thrivikrama incarnation. The sage took water in his hands and threw it at Vishnu, which created the beautiful mole in his breast, Sreevatsa so named.—*M.B. Santhiparva I*, 351.

Sree Vamana's first stride reached to the limits of the solar system; his second stride touched the confines of the Dhruva-mandala; his third stride covered the Brahmanda and pierced beyond. He turned to Bashkali (Bali) and said, "Find a place for my third stride." The Asura hung down his head in deep dejection, when his guru Sukra spoke up for him and said "He can but give what exists, but cannot create new worlds for you. You see he has kept back nothing." And Bali added "Lord ! whatever was mine to give I have freely given you. The worlds are but a speck of dust in the shoreless immensity of which you are the Lord. To bring new worlds and systems and universes into manifestation is yours, and I dare not arrogate that mighty power to myself. Besides, I promised to give you as much land as you could cover in three strides. It was with reference to the form that you assumed when you came to me as a young Brahmana. Had I but a glimpse of your all-pervading form then, I would not have dreamt of making such a promise to you. Further, is it not ridiculous in the extreme for me to speak of making a gift to you of what is yours?" Sree Vamana replied graciously, "You are the soul of truth. I find it hard to reply to you. Ask of me what you will, and it is yours." "Then" exclaimed Bali, "may my soul ever be centred in you. May I meet death at your hands and live for ever in the Swetha-dweepa among your elect." "Nay," replied the Lord "remain thou here for another Yuga until I come down as the mighty Boar. I will enter the world where you reside and take you unto myself with great pleasure."

Bashkali took birth in the Vaivaswatha Manvanthara

as Bali and held sway over the three worlds. The Lord Vishnu went to him as a Brahmana and begged three feet of land from him. (The first of these incidents took place during a previous Kritha-yuga, when Indra and Vamana went to king Bashkali and Indra begged the land in the name of Vamana)—*Padmapurana, Srishtikhanda*, 24, 25, 26.

Q :—Bali was an Asura. If he performed Yagnas, he must have invoked the Devathas and made offerings to them. Now, would he offer worship and reverence to his foes whom he had defeated and deprived of their kingdom ?

A :—The Devas were the enemies of Bali, and not Mahavishnu. The Asura was well-known as an ardent devotee of the Lord. His sacrifices were made to propitiate Vishnu and not the Devas.

Q :—Then, would the Lord destroy the yagna of his devotee ?

A :—If his elect fought among themselves, it was clearly his duty to punish the guilty—Go.

The Devas are divided into two classes—Ajana-devas and Karma-devas. The former are nominated to various posts in the government of the universe at the beginning of each Manvanthra. They had finished their course of evolution in the three worlds long ago in previous Kalpas and had risen to the level of Devas ; they come down with the Lord in this Kalapa to serve under Him in the departments of creation, preservation and destruction. They are invoked during sacrifices and receive the offerings therein. They are anterior to the Karma-devas who attain the rank of gods in this world-period through their merit. Bali was the foe of the latter alone and could very well offer worship to the former in sacrifices. It is the Karma-devas that place obstacles in the way of others performing yagnas. The Ajana-devas have no necessity to sacrifice to any gods ; but the Karma-devas have to do that. Hence it is out of place

to hold that Indra and the other Devas performed yagnas.—*Thilaka.*

32. *Praise* :—The Lord abode for long ages at Siddhasrama invisible to all intent upon the welfare of the worlds. For, the Sruthi says “He willed that he might become many. He performed thapas.” Kasyapa came to know of it and dwelt for a thousand years there with his wife Adithi, observing a holy vow to find favour with the Lord. When it was drawing to an end, Vishnu appeared to him and asked him what he would have. The Devas came there on that occasion and added their prayers to his.

99. 5. “Lord! In thy body I see the Devas, the Rishis, the Uragas, and all beings, even Brahma and Maheswara”—*Geetha XI, 15.*

100. 21. *Offerings* :—It could have been only the Aupasana, for, he who takes upon himself the initiatory vow in a sacrifice cannot engage in Agnihothra or Darsapoornamasa-yagas until it is over.

101. 13. *Six days* :—The Kamba Ramayana says that the Yaga was performed on the days presided over by the asterisms Anusha, Jyeshtha, Moola, Poorvashadha, and Uttharashadha.

102. 3. Mareecha and Subahu came in the afternoon—*Ad. R. I.*

20. It was the Gandharvasthra that routed Mareecha—*Kamba Ramayana.*

103. 1. *Despatched* :—Rama drove Mareecha from the sacrificial ground, while Lakshmana slew the rest.—*Bhattikavya*; *Ad. R. I.*

104. 1. Visvamithra was quite capable of destroying his enemies without the least exertion; his yogic powers were so great. But, he wanted to proclaim to the world the greatness and glory of Rama; he had to bring about the

decrees of Karma and free the Rakshasas from their dread curses, and give them a brighter life ; so, he adopted the expedient of bringing down Rama and Lakshmana to protect his sacrifice from the Rakshasas. Further, he had to hand over to Rama all the Asthras and Vidyas with him that they might be utilised in destroying Ravana and the Rakshasas and relieve the earth of her dark load of sin. He knew that this was impossible, so long as the Purusha was not united to the Para-sakthi ; so, to bring about their union in the shape of a marriage between Rama and Seetha whom he well knew as the great mother that had taken birth in the house of Janaka, he takes him to Mithila, ostensibly to have a sight of their rare bow. Rama, who was Boundless Wisdom and Power, desired to exemplify in his life the truth that nothing comes to good except it were imparted by the guru and waited upon Visvamithra with all reverence as the most dutiful disciple, to be initiated into the mysteries of the divine weapons.

20. Visvamithra had bound the Lord by his devotion ; He was his servant to order about and would not be away from His elect even for a moment. "Bheeshma" says Krishna "is reclining on his sharp bed of arrows ; like a dying fire his life-breaths grow dimmer and dimmer ; yet his heart, his mind and his soul are centred in me. Is it then surprising that I should think of nothing but him?"

24. Visvamithra entertained Rama and Lashmana for three days more and invited them to go to Mithila on the fourth.—*A. R. I. 5.*

Janaka had earnestly and respectfully invited Dasaratha to his yagna ; but, the poor king, utterly disconsolate at being torn away from the joy of his heart, had no memory for it.—*A. R. III. 30.*

27. *Given* :—The Padmapurana says that the Lord Mahadeva gave it to Janaka. The Koormapurana says

" Mahadeva was mightily pleased and bestowed his bow on Janaka, who destroyed his enemies therewith."

105. 10. Arjuna performed severe thapas on Mount Mandara and was blessed with wonderful boons and mighty asthras by Mahadeva, Indra and the other gods. He was invited to the Swarga-loka later on and on the eve of his departure, he turned to the presiding deity of the mountain and said "The Rishis who perform rare austerities to obtain salvation seek your lovely retreats. Brahmanas, Kshathriyas and Vaisyas out of count, have you enabled to win the regions of light. Spots of high holiness and wonderful sanctity are scattered all over you. I spent a happy time of it on your peaks. My eyes have been delighted often and often by the glorious views of your rivers, lakes, fountains, valleys, hills, woods and hermitages. I have eaten of your delicious fruits ; I have drunk of the water of your nectarine rivers ; health of body and peace of mind have I been blessed with in consequence. I have roamed far and wide over your confines ; I have heard the sweet music of the golden throated Gandharvas and the stately vedic chants of the Maherhis. As a wilful child I have sported on your fatherly lap. Now, I go away from here, not that I like it, but duty calls me elsewhere. I humbly crave your permission to go.—*M. B. Vanaparva*, 42.

25. *Sona* :—Rises in Mainaka or Amarakantak and flows east into the Ganga.

In old days it had its source in the district of Bundelkand and joined the Ganga near Patna.

106. 11. *Vidarbha* :—On the north of Kunthala, lay the great kingdom of Vidarbha, which seems to have extended from the banks of the Krishna to the Narmada. On account of its great size it was also called Maharashtra or great province (*Bala Ramayana* X. 74, *Anargha Raghava* VII. 96. Kunthala too appears to have been once included in

Maharashtra. It lay to the south of the Narmada, as Aja is said to have crossed the river before entering it (*Raghuvamsa*, V. 59). The people were called Kratha Kaisikas, from two chiefs Kratha and Kaisika, who, according to the *Vishnu Purana* IV. 12, were the sons of king Vidarbha (*Raghuvamsa*, V. 61 ; *Malavikagnimitra*, V. 2). The ancient capital was Kundina, sometimes called Vidarbha (*Hemachandra*, IV. 45,) which is probably the modern Bedar. It was the seat of Bheema, father of Damayanthi and of Bheeshma the father of Rukmani. Rukma, the son of Bheema, is said to have transferred the capital to Bhojakata, which must be looked for further north, as he went up to the Narmada to avenge the insult of his sister's abduction and would not return to Kundina unsuccessful (*Harivamsa*, 118 ; V. P. V. 26). Agnimitra divided Vidarbha into two parts lying north and south of the Varada river, which, in its Painganga branch, separates the Assigned Districts of Berar from the Nizam's dominions. (*Malavikagnimitra*, V. 13). Amaravathi in Berar appears to have been the capital of the northern division and Prathishtana (Paitan) on the Godaveri was for a long time the chief place in the southern division (*Kathasaritsagara*. 51, 117 ; 75, 21). Kalyani, west of Hyderabad, was also an important town—*Geography of Ancient India*.

27. *Magadha* :—Lay beyond the land of the Maladas and the Karushas. Its old capital was Girivraja (collection of hills) also called Rajagriha or Royal residence. *M. B. Sabhaparva* (20, 21) describes its position in the journey of Krishna with Bheema and Arjuna. From this account it appears that the travellers, after crossing the Ganga and the Sona, travelled east and came to mount Goratha from which they viewed the five hills, which girded the town of Girivraja—Vipula, Varaha, Vrishabha, Rishigiri and Chaithyaka. They passed over the last and destroyed

the triumphal pillar thereon and went to the palace of Jarasandha, which stood within the hills. The Sona joined the Ganga in old days near Patna. The direction of the journey therefore clearly points to Purana Rajgir, with which old Rajagriha has been identified. General Cunningham, in his interesting and learned Geography of Ancient India, gives a special map showing the positions of the five hills now called Vipulagiri, Rathnagiri, Udayagiri, Sonagiri, and Vaibhargiri. Of these, Vipulagiri is north and is identifiable with Vipula, as it was so known also in Pali. Rathnagiri is north-east and beyond it there is another lofty hill called Sailagiri. The first has been identified with Pandavagiri of Pali literature ; and the name seems to indicate its connection with the doings of the Pandavas. Sailagiri is very probably Gorathagiri, as it is the nearest northerly hill and at the same time lofty enough to give a view of the five hills which were pointed out from it. There is very little doubt that Rathnagiri is the Chaithyakagiri of the *M. B.*, as the travellers passed over it on their way to the residence of Jarasandha which stood among the hills. Rishigiri is Isigili of Pali and is probably the Udayagiri on the south-east. Varaha is probably a misprint for Vihara. If so, it may be easily identified with Vaibhar. The Punchan river passes by the place and is clearly the Magadha of the Ramayana. (There is a new Rajgir outside the hills, said to have been founded by Bindusara, king of Magadha, who met Buddha while staying in the Pandava hill said to have been founded by Udayaswa, grandson of Ajathasatru (*Vayu Purana, Poorvabagha; Hemachandra IV. 42; Trikandasesha*). The next capital of Magadha was Kusumapura of Pataliputra. For a long time it was the greatest town in India according to the concurrent testimony of Sanskrit and Greek writers (*Dasakumara-charitra; Arrian, Indica 10*).

The Greek assures us that it was situated near the confluence of the Ganga and the Eronaboas, which is another name for the Sona (*Sreeharsha-charitra* I. has it as Hiranyabahu, while *Amara* I 10, 34 names it as Hiranyakavaha, having a golden current, probably on account of its broad yellow sands. Sona is perhaps a corruption of Suvarna, gold). This fact is borne out by the reference in the drama *Mudrarakshasa* (III, IV), which distinctly mentions its situation on the Ganga and also alludes to the Sona. It has been satisfactorily shown that the Sona formerly joined the Ganges above the town of Patna (Bengal Asiatic Society's Journal XIV, 137. "An effaced channel" says Thornton "may still be traced opening on that of the Ganges to Bankipore below Dinapore"). So we may conclude that Kusumapura stood near it. Kalidasa speaks of it in the *Raghuvamsa* (VI. 24), but makes a mistake in assigning it as the capital of Magadha in the time of Rama's grandfather. (Hiouen Thsang says that Kusumapura was in ruins when he visited the country and Pataliputra is the new town. This can hardly be correct, as Palibothra is mentioned by Greek writers and Kusumapura by Dandi and others).

Magadha was also called Keekata in later literature—(*Trikandasesha*; *Naishada* XII, 88.) The *Gaya-mahathmya* locates Gaya in Keekata or Magadha and gives a Sanscrit name Punahpunah to the river Punpun. Magadha has given its name to the Magadhi dialect described in the eleventh section of *Vararuchi's Prakritha Prakasa*. According to Visvanatha it was the language of the attendants on royal harems (*Sah.* VI), which seems to explain that the term Magadha was applied to bards (Bhats) simply because they belonged to that country (*Amara* II, 8, 97, *Sisupalavadha* XI, 1). The word Magadhi is also applied to some plants, which although found in Magadha, are not peculiar to it.—*Geography of Ancient India*.

Kausambi :—It is near the modern Kosam, 30 miles above Allahabad. When Hasthinapura was engulfed by the Ganga, the capital was transferred to Kausambi.—*M. B. Bheeshmaparva IV.* 21. But the Kathasaritsagara IX. 4, ascribes its founding to Sathaneka, son of Janamejaya. The scenes of the drama Rathnavali are laid at Kausambi. Vamana under Panini IV. 2, 79, speaks of two Kausambis—the old and the new. The new one probably represents the modern Kosam. In its ruins, General Cunningham found a stone pillar with an inscription containing the name Kausambi. The old one, from the description given by the Kathasaritsagara, seems to have been further east in the heart of the province of Vathsya, whence it is also called Vathsapattana (*Hemachandra IV.* 41). The name Vathsya occurs in the *M. B.* more than once (*Sabha-parva* 13; *Vana-parva* 234). But the genuineness of these verses is more than questionable, as Kausambi was not founded till years after the demise of the Pandavas and the district was very likely subject to the king of southern Panchala.

Mahodaya was anciently called Kanya-kubja. It was also called Gadhinagara or capital of King Gadhi. *Hemachandra IV*, 39 adds Kausa and Kusasthala, on what authority I do not know. The names are also found together in Bala Ramayana X. In the time of Hiouen Thsang's visit it was the most celebrated place in Hindustan and the capital of the south-eastern kingdom. Its splendour remained undiminished until the time of the Muhammadan invasion. The principal families of the Bengal Brahmanas claim descent from Kanyakubja and their great poet Sreeharsha mentions with pride his honorable reception by its king (*Naishada*).—*Geography of Ancient India.*

Dharmaranya is in Magadha. The God of Dharma

was afraid of Soma and concealed himself there. Girivraja is next to it. Kanyakubja, the modern Kanouj, is the country of the deformed virgins.

109. 31. *Forgiveness* :—Once upon a time Bali, the Asura king, approached his grand-father Prahlada and said “Reverend Sir ! which is greater, *forgiveness or assertiveness* (*parakrama*)?” And to him replied Prahlada, “It is hard to decide which is greater. Forgiveness is not always advisable nor successful ; and assertiveness is not always the best course of action. He who practises forgiveness in time and out of time meets with innumerable difficulties. His servants pay little heed to his orders ; no one accords him the least respect. Hence, the wise never advise a course of unvarying forgiveness. His servants look upon him as a thing of no importance and lay themselves open to many an offence, many a sin. Mean minded men seek to deprive him of his wealth. They make free with his conveyances, dresses, beds, seats, food, drink, and other articles. They use for themselves without his permission the things that he ordered them to give to others. They omit to pay him even the outward marks of ordinary respect. Such a life, exposed to insult and contempt every moment of it, is a veritable hell. His servants, his children, and his attendants speak to him harshly. Nothing is too sacred for them—their master’s goods, their master’s wives, their master’s life. And alas ! it is not very often that those wives are not their accomplices. Servants by nature are indolent and always seek to live a life of ease and pleasure ; if they are not kept under strict discipline and punished now and then, it does not take much to ruin them, body and soul. Bad servants find it a pleasant task and easy to drag their masters down to their level or make away with him. No one pays the least respect to him who does not make his power felt by others.

Serpents cause great loss of life and havoc among men ; yet they form objects of reverent worship. But none takes the least notice of the Lord Garuda that is the relentless foe of these pests. So, he who forgives in time and out of time, he who practises patience without bringing his intelligence to bear upon it, is mischievous to himself and to others.

But he whose anger and assertiveness are always in evidence is prone to punish the guilty and the innocent alike. In time, he comes to make foes of his friends. His kith and kin turn away from him. His contempt of others brings upon him loss of wealth and power ; he sees around him nothing but scorn, hate, revenge, deceit and sorrow. He who gives way to anger and punishes all alike, all unjustly, loses very soon his kin, his wealth and his life. People keep clear of him, whose hand is heavy alike upon his benefactors and foes. A snake comes into a house and makes no difference between one that had befriended him and another that had not. It is but a dog's life that a man leads whom all fear and tremble at. Countless eyes would be on the watch to hurl upon his head ruin and misery. So it is not meet that we should be assertive for ever ; nor is it meet that we should forgive and be patient for ever. Patience and assertiveness must have their own place in the life of a man, if he is to lead a life of happiness here and hereafter.

A former benefactor of yours might happen to do you an injustice later on ; forgive him. Another harms you unknowingly ; forgive him. If all were omniscient down here, what a beautiful world it would be ! But, it is a golden ideal and no matter of fact. But, one offends you deliberately, calmly and with full intent, and cries out to you with clasped hands and streaming eyes "Alas ! I did it in utter ignorance." Forgive him not.

He is a cool calculating criminal ; be his offence so very slight, he should be punished and that, in a way he would not be likely to forget in a hurry. Generally it is safe and advisable that an offender should be let off the first time with a severe warning ; but he should not escape if he offends again. If he pleads ignorance, he might be excused after a searching enquiry. Kindness overcomes the strongest. Kindness roots out many a hopeless sin. A little thought convinces us that gentleness and kindness are more powerful and useful in the world than strength or power or riches or intellect. Due allowance must be made to time and place, to men and circumstances ; else, our schemes fall to pieces. Sometimes deference to public opinion would have us forgive the offenders.

But it is a curious thing to know that anger destroys as well as benefits. Joy and sorrow arise out of anger. Anger, when under control, is our best benefactor ; anger as our master is our worst enemy. So, anger requires a most careful handling. There is no crime that one would not commit under the influence of anger. An angry man will strike his guru dead. He will pierce to the quick the hearts of those who are entitled to his respect and reverence. It is hard for him to draw a line between what he should say and what he should not. His hand sticks at nothing ; his tongue is ever sharp ; the innocent meet their death at his hands ; the guilty are accorded respect and consideration by him ; he is on the downward track to hell. The wise know this, and keep their temper under perfect control ; their life is happy here and hereafter. Anger should not be met with anger ; gentleness saves us from great dangers ; it is a greater benefactor to him who lets loose his anger upon us. A weak man, if set upon by one stronger than himself, should never give way to his anger, for, he but seeks his ruin. The re-

gions of the blessed are closed against him who thus throws away his life and his chances with open eyes. So, anger should find no place in the life of a weak man. He who renders back gentleness when oppressed and insulted, he whose soft answer turns away the wrath of his enemy, secures to himself supreme happiness in the other worlds. The sight of our enemy who had done us grievous wrong and is in the grip of misfortune and misery should ever bring forth our greatest pity and kindness; it matters not whether we are in a position to punish him or no. The wise ever accord their praises to him who keeps his temper. Forgiveness is the mother of success, as truly as virtue is higher than vice. Gentleness is a nobler trait in a man's character than cruelty. They whom the wise regard as great, do but put on the appearance of sternness and anger ; but, their hearts are ever calm and gentle. They whose clear vision sees anger ahead and firmly represses its surging energies, are recognised as great by the Sons of Wisdom. He who gives way to anger deprives himself of the faculty of distinguishing between right and wrong and transgresses the golden mean ; so, it is good that we put away anger from us. An angry man can never hope to adorn himself with the virtues of fortitude, skill and success ; while the highest power comes to him who knows no anger. An angry man can never hope to utilise what few powers he has earned in past births. It is only the ignorant that regard anger as prowess or valor. Verily, anger is let loose among us for our destruction. He who sails on the path of right action should steer clear of the rocks of anger. He who has risen above the ordinary duties of life has left anger far behind him. Where would be harmony and peace in this world, if there were not among us the Great Ones who are as patient as Mother Earth ? Anger is the root of quarrel and strife. What a world would it be where anger is met with

anger, where the guilty turn upon their judges, where scorn is met with scorn, where fathers slay their sons, where sons slay their fathers, where husbands slay their wives, where wives slay their husbands!! A vast house of slaughter it would be where creatures would cease to come into existence ; for, where is the peace and confidence that would ensure them a safe reception and abode ? If the rulers of men give way to unbridled anger, their subjects disappear in the world. All beings are born and exist and have their short span of happiness down here only through the eternal patience of the Lords of Compassion and Forgiveness. So, patience should never fail us at all times, under all circumstances, even in the face of the greatest dangers. The world-scheme is based on forgiveness and patience. He who keeps down his rising anger in the face of insult, blow, calumny and slander, he who extends his forgiveness and compassion fully and freely to the offender—he is more than a man, he is a Son of Wisdom, he is welcomed in the high and eternal worlds. The man of anger narrows his heart and his intellect ; he meets with ruin and misery here and hereafter.

Rishi Kasyapa has spoken upon this in no faint terms. " Forgiveness is the highest duty ; forgivness is the highest sacrifice ; the Vedas, the Sruthis, the Truth, nay, the eternal Brahman itself is but forgiveness. The surerst safeguard of our spiritual energy, past, present and future is forgiveness. The holiest thapas, the most utter purity is but forgiveness. The universe has its stay and support in forgiveness. He who knows this forgives under all conditions ; joy and sorrow, prosperity and adversity find him ever the same. The high worlds attained by yagnas, the high worlds attained by those who have mastered the Vedas, the high worlds attained by those who have performed the rarest thapas, the high worlds attained by those

who have fulfilled all the Vedic injunctions to their uttermost—they form the portion of those who are blessed with forgiveness. Blessed are the forgiving; for, theirs is the world of Brahman. The thejas of the Great Ones is but forgiveness; the supreme knowledge of the Rishis is but forgiveness; the truth of those that aspire after Truth is but forgiveness; the peace that passeth all understanding is but forgiveness. The man of wisdom should ever wear the jewel of forgiveness on his crown. He who treads on the Path of Forgiveness secures high respect and honor in this world; he becomes Brahman. There are no worlds of light that could not be reached by one in whom forgiveness has triumphed over anger. So, forgiveness is the highest duty, the holiest law"—*M. B.* Vanaparva. 28, 29.

110. 18. *No husband* :—She was a virgin all her life, a Naishthika-Brahmacharini—*Thilaka*.

Kampeelya :—It was one of the principal towns in the Dakshina-panchala and was situated on the Ganga (*M. B. Adiparva* 137). It gave its name to the country Kampeelyadesa (Kathasarithsagara, 25) and it probably included Kanyakubja, because the girls from whom the place is said to have derived its name were married to a king of Kampeelya; besides, Kanyakubja is a separate principality. Kampil, to the North West of Kanyakubja, has been identified with the old Kampilya *Geography of Ancient India*. Kampil is a village in Kaimganj Tahsil, Farukhabad District, United Provinces, situated on the bold cliff of the Ganges, 28 miles north-west of Fatehgarh town. This village is celebrated in the *M. B.* as being the capital of southern Panchala and of king Draupada. Here his daughter Draupadi married the five Pandava brethren. The villagers still show the mounds where the Raja's castle stood, and point with pride to a small hollow called the Kund of Draupadi. They aver

that the ancient city was formed by a hermit named Kam-pila Rikh and that before the days of Draupada it was ruled by a king named Brahmadatta. Two yearly fairs are held here in October—November and March—April. Police-Station, Post-office, School.

There are no rest-houses of any kind at Kampil, but the Jains put up in houses attached to a Jain temple. They are however now building a *dharmasala*.

At Kaimganj there is an inspection bungalow about 3 furlongs from the Railway Station and two *serais* in the own. A *dharmasala* is in course of building at a distance of about two miles from the station. Manufactures of Kaimganj-knives, nut-cutters, and locks. Exports—oranges, tobacco, knives, locks, potatoes, and sugar-candy. Tobacco is exported from Kampil.

Kaimganj is 104 miles from Cawnpore by the Bombay Baroda and Central India Railway and Fatehgarh 82 miles.—*Traveller's Companion*.

Held sway :—His mother Somada was of the Kshathriya caste—*Thilaka*.

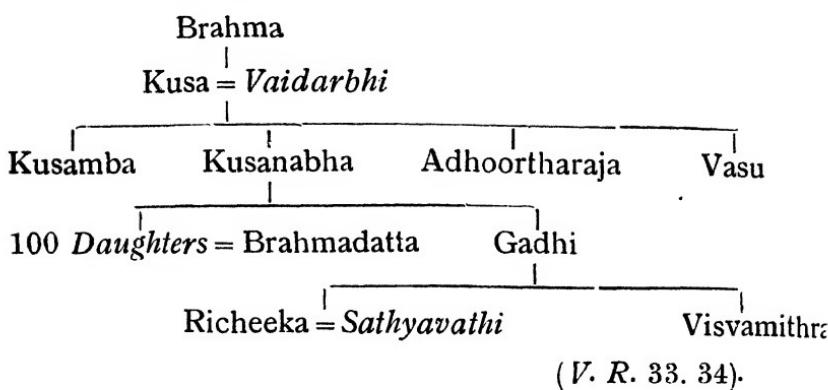
29. *Dropped away* :—He was a mind-born son like the Patriarchs and the Kumaras ; and it is no wonder that his unbounded spiritual might transformed the girls—*Thilaka*.

III. 3. *Rejoiced* :—The fortitude and calm assurance of the girls who defied even Vayu, the most powerful of the gods ; the noble father, to whom it was given to be the parent of such wonderful progeny ; and last, but not least, her wonderful good fortune in being enabled to call them her daughters-in-law—she could not sufficiently admire.

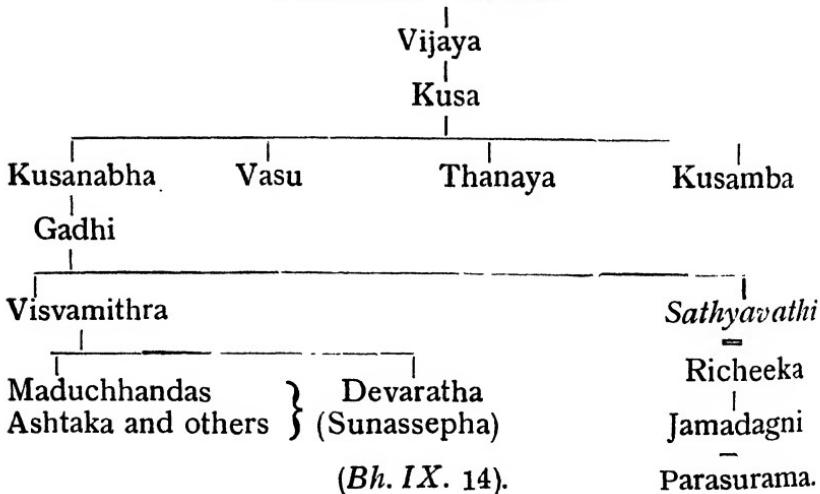
III. 6. The greatness of women and the marvellous things that thapas could accomplish form the subject of this chapter.

Visvamithra :—

The line of Visvamithra.



Purooravas = *Urvashi*.



Purooravas

Amavasu

Bheema

Kanchana

Suhothra

Kusamba

Kusanabha

Amoorthaya

Amavasu

Gadhi		
Visvamithra	Sathyavathi = Richeeka	
Vayupurana	Brahmapurana, Harivamsa	(V. P. IV. 7)
Kusasva or Kusasthambha		{ Kusasva
Kusanabha		Kusanabha
Amoortharayas		Amoorthimath
Vasu		Kusika

18. *Gadhi* :—Kusamba prayed that the son born to him should be the equal of Indra in might. The king of the gods apprehended the loss of his power and authority in consequence and took birth as Gadhi—*V. P. IV. 7.*

24. *Kausiki* :—flows on the east of Darbhanga through northern Bhagalpur and western Poorniya. In olden times, its channel was much nearer to the civil station of Poorniya than at present, owing to its constant shifting towards the waste. The country and its banks is described in the *M. B.* II. 30 as *Kausiki Kachcha* and must have included parts of the modern districts of Bhagalpur and Poorniya. Puraniya (Purneah), signifying *of old*, was probably its capital and there is a tradition that it was once governed by king Virata, but he cannot be the Virata of Mahabharatha. Near the banks of the *Kausiki* (Coosi) was the hermitage of the Rishi Rishyasringa, who is said to have been brought to Champa by its king Lomapada for the removal of unnatural calamities. (*M. B. III. 110.*) I am told the hermitage is still pointed out to travellers ; but it is at a considerable distance from the Coosi.—*Geography of Ancient India.*

112. 18. *Queen of night* :—The yaga was finished on the full-moon day ; and on the second day from it they set out to Mithila. So, the moon rose about an hour and a half after sunset.

113. 9. *Sona* :—The modern Son. The village of Sonepur (Sonapura) in Saran District, Bengal, is perhaps the most widely known place in it. It is situated at the confluence of the Gandaki and the Ganges. It is famous for its great fair held for ten days during the full moon of Karthika. This is probably one of the oldest melas in India, its origin being said to be contemporaneous with Rama and Seetha. It was at Sonepur that Vishnu rescued from the clutches of a crocodile an elephant that had gone to drink. A temple was subsequently erected here by Rama, when on his way to Janakpur to fight for Seetha. Sonepur is considered a place of exceptional holiness. The fair, attended by great numbers of persons, lasts a fortnight ; but it is at its height two days before and two days after the bathing in the Ganges.

The chief articles of trade are elephants, horses, and piece-goods.

Annual races are also held here.

No *serai* or *dharmaśala* at Sonapur, but there is one serai at Hajipur about one mile from the Railway station.

Sonepur Junction, on the Bengal and North-Western Railway, is 170 miles from Katihar Junction—*Travellers' Companion*.

114. 15. *Two daughters* :—Maharishi Bhrigu went to the God of the Himavat and said “ Give me your daughter Uma unto wife.” “ Nay ” replied Himavan “ I have passed my word to Siva, and my girl’s heart goes with her hand.” “ Well,” rejoined Bhrigu “ since you made me request you in vain, you shall be deprived of your gems”—*M. B. Santhiparva* 352.

1. Of the hierarchy of Pithris, four are endowed with form and three are formless. The latter are named Vairajas, after their father Viraja, the Patriarch. They gave their mind-born daughter Mena in marriage to

Himavan, who begot of her a son Mainaka and three daughters Aparna, Ekaparna, and Ekapatala. Mainaka had a son Krauncha. Aparna passed long years in stern thapas, eschewing all sustenance whatever. Her mother said to her time and oft "Do not so"; Hence she was called Uma. Ekaparna and Ekapatala allowed themselves each a leaf and a tender shoot respectively. The three were Perfected Souls (Brahma-gnanis) and were gifted with marvelous powers. Uma, the greatest among them, married Siva; Ekaparna became the wife of Asitha, the teacher of Yoga and was the mother of Devala, the Brahma-gnani; Ekapatala wedded Jaigeeshavya, the Mahathma and gave birth to Sankha and Likhitha, her mind-born sons.

2. Indra sent Agni to separate Uma and Paramasiva who lived for too long a time together. Uma cursed Agni to bear in him the energy of Siva that dropped upon the earth.

3. The wives of the seven sages came to have a bath in the Ganga; all of them except Arundhathi, the wife of Vasishtha, were attracted to Skanda, who took six faces to look at each of them. Sarasvathi gave him the Veena; the Lord Vayu gave him the cock and the peacock to adorn his banner. The nursling of the Krittikas was called Karthikeya. He pierced the mount Krauncha and slew Tharaka, the Asura, whereupon the gods elected him the leader of their hosts.—*Vayu-purana.* 72.

18. *Certain ends* :—The Devas were hard pressed by the Asura Tharaka and were on the look out for some one to lead them in battle. Later on they decided to have a son by Mahadeva and besought Himavan to give them his eldest girl Kutila to bear in her the fiery energy of Siva. They took her to Brahma. "It seems to me she is no good" said he observing her carefully. Her pride was wounded and she spake back sharp. "I wonder any one should

entertain the ghost of a doubt about it." This flagrant insult to the majesty of the Grandsire brought down upon her a curse. "The waters shall be your form henceforth." For long ages she remained outside the Brahmanda in her body of waters. Agni placed in her the energy of Siva. When Maha-vishnu incarnated as Vamana, his toe pierced the outer wall of Brahmanda and the Ganga flowed into it through the aperture caused thereby. Hence, her name of Vishnu-pada.—*Vamana-purana.*

She fell along with the waters that stood outside of the Brahmanda and Brahma reverently bore it in his water-pot. The tears of joy that fell from the eyes of Maha-deva formed the waters outside of the Brahmanda, and Narayana was its presiding deity—*Kamika-samhitha.*

Brahma washed the feet of the Lord Vishnu with the sacred waters and deposited them in his water-pot. But *Sankara-samhitha* has it that Uma, after her marriage with Parama-siva, playfully closed his eyes with her palms and his third eye of fire arose in consequence. Gouri was filled with terror at the sight and the perspiration that streamed from her hands was what filled the water-pot of Brahma. In response to Bhageeratha's prayers he sent down the holy current, that was but another aspect of Brahmic energy, to cleanse away the sins of the world—*Thilaka.*

117. 9. *The birth of Karthikeya* :—In the days of yore the Devas suffered a series of defeats at the hands of the Danavas. Indra was filled with anxiety and was eagerly on the look out for a general to lead the celestial hosts against their enemy. He repaired to the mount Mandara and was plunged in deep thought over the problem, when he heard the piteous wail of a woman crying "Alas ! Is there none to save me from this horrible fate ? Would that some one extended his protecting arm over me or pointed out some one in whose strength and mercy I can take refuge."

Indra hastened to the spot exclaiming " Fear not, gentle lady ! I am yours to command" and saw a huge Asura of terrific aspect towering over a gentle lady whom he was brutality dragging away in spite of her shrieks and struggles.

He recognised him as Kesin, a redoubtable Danava, hard, pitiless and unprincipled. " Dog of an Asura!" cried he " Stand off. How dare you insult this lady? Know you not that Indra, the wielder of Vajra, holds sway over the three worlds ?" Kesin laughed loud and long. " And so, you are Indra—verily a name to frighten with. This lady is mine to possess, mine by right of might. Boy! Meddle not with your betters. Return home lest your mother grow anxious about you." And as if to punctuate his words, he hurled his mace at Indra, who shattered it to pieces with his Vajra. A long and terrible fight ensued between the two and the braggart turned tail and fled.

Indra respectfully approached the lady, calmed her fears and said " Supremely glad am I in being allowed to render you this slight mark of my respect and esteem. But it would give me infinite pleasure to know whose cause I have been fortunate to espouse to-day." And to him so chivalrous and fair-spoken, did the lady make answer, " I am the daughter of Brahma, I and my sister Daithya-sena. We used to disport ourselves on the lovely slopes of this mountain, of course with the permission of our father. This Kesi paid his court to us long and assiduously ; but Daithya-sena listened with a willing ear to his protestations and promises and—was lost. I had all along an unspeakable horror and loathing of the wretch and would not tolerate him even for a moment. I cannot thank you sufficiently for your having delivered me from the clutches of that fiend, from

fate worse than death. And now I cannot too much trespass upon your kindness and protection. Complete the good work you have begun by finding for me a husband

and protector." " You are one of my cousins" replied Indra " for my mother Dakshayani and yours are sisters. I would like that you should speak to me about yourself and your might." Devasena said " I am a woman, weak and powerless ; but my father has passed his word that he to whom I give my hand will be the master of the Devas and the Asuras." " But" broke in Indra " just tell me precisely the powers that your husband will be invested with." " My future husband" rejoined the lady " will be devoted to the service of the Brahmanas ; his fame will illuminate the three worlds ; unbounded will be his strength and might; he will bring under his rule Devas, Danavas, Yakshas, Kinnaras, Uragas, Rakshasas and Daithyas of evil lives. He will assist you in establishing your rule over all beings". Her words filled Indra with sorrow and anxiety. " Alas ! It is but an ideal and is not to be met with in this world of hard realities." Looking up, he saw the sun rising from out of the portals of the east. The moon was entering the orb of the sun. It was the time of the new-moon and the hour was one of frightful possibilities. The Devas and the Asuras were engaged in mortal fight on the Mount of the East. The morning twilight was tinged with blood-red clouds. The waters of the mighty ocean took on the same hue. Agni was entering the orb of the sun, bearing with him the oblations offered with potent mantras. by Bhrigu, Angiras and other mighty Rishis. The twenty-four parvas (fortnights) were offering worship to the sun. This wonderful conjunction of the sun and the moon and the god of Fire filled him with dread and wonder. " This frightful conjunction of the sun and the moon portends a great battle towards the close of this night. The river Sindhu flows with fresh blood. Jackals are howling at the sun with fiery mouths. This conjunction of the sun, the moon and the fire is wonderful, terrible and

full of unlimited possibilities. If the god Soma should beget a son now, he would be the very best husband that this lady could get. But the god of Fire is likewise endowed with manifold excellences; in fact, he is the type and representative of the gods. If he should happen to beget a son, this lady would have her wish."

So he proceeded along with her to the abode of Brahma and bowing low before the Grandsire, said "Lord ! Provide this lady with a meet husband, a great warrior and mighty." "It shall be so" replied Brahma "The mighty being who will take birth at this auspicious moment will be the husband of Devasena and the leader of your hosts."

Indra and the lady took respectful leave of Brahma and repaired along with the celestial hosts to where the Seven Rishis were performing yagnas and offering the Soma juice to the Devas. The god of Fire responded to their calls and came out of the solar orb. He entered the sacrificial fire, received the offerings made by the holy ones and proceeded to distribute them among the Devathas. But, on coming out of the house of the Sapatha-rshis, he chanced to espy their beautiful wives at their baths. His heart was troubled and his desires cried out to him. But he controlled himself by a strong effort and said "These are models of chastity and purity. They are beyond the reach of other men's love. But I shall dwell for ever in the Garhapathy fire on their altars and enjoy that privilege of looking at them every minute of my life. May be I will touch them with my flames now and then." Long years did he dwell among them, drinking in the sweet poison of their beauty and suffering the pangs of an ever unrequitted love. At last, in utter despair of winning them to his arms, he retired to the depths of a forest to make away with his wretched life.

Now, Swaha, the daughter of Daksha, had long ago lost her heart to him with no return. She was ever seeking a chance to win his love and could not let slip this golden opportunity. "The thing is ridiculously easy. I will even take the forms of the wives of the Seven Rishis and steal the heart of my lord who is infatuated with these Brahmana ladies. It is the very best way I could hit upon for gratifying his desires and mine ; and no one will be the worse for it." So, she approached him in the guise of Siva, the wife of Angiras and said "My sisters have, after due deliberation, sent me over to you. We are eating our hearts out from love of you. I am Siva, the wife of Angiras. If you accede not to our wishes, our blood will be upon your head." "But" asked Agni " how did you come to know that I entertained any feelings of love towards you and your friends?" "It is no great mystery" replied she "You had our love from a long way back ; but we were afraid of you, and naturally. But now, we know by unmistakable signs that we are not disagreeable to you. Now, I should be back very soon ; my sisters are even now expecting me." So she had her wish and Agni was deceived. She was returning through the forest, when she suddenly said to herself "Fool that I was not to have thought of it before ! Those that dwell hereabout will certainly speak ill of my lord Agni and of the wives of the Seven Rishis whose form I have taken and whose innocence I have befouled. So I shall transform myself into an eagle and escape from this forest without being suspected." She proceeded to where she observed a mountain all white and threw the blazing energy of Agni into a golden fire-altar she saw there. And thus she went to the god of Fire time after time in the guise of the wives of the other sages, all except Arundhathi, whose form she could not take—such was her utter

chastity and devotion to her husband. So seven times did she throw the fiery energy of Agni into the golden altar on the white mount. A boy of exceeding might rose out of it on the first day of the bright fortnight. He assumed a distinct human form on the second day ; he was recognisable as a babe on the third and his limbs were distinctly developed on the fourth. He had six faces, twelve ears, twelve eyes, twelve feet, twelve arms, one neck and one stomach. He shone like the sun rising in the midst of a mass of red clouds. He seized with a playful hand the mighty bow that Mahadeva used in his encounter with the Asuras of the three Cities and uttered roars that caused the beings in all the worlds to quake with affright. The great serpents Chithra and Airavata were enraged by these frightful sounds and sprang upon him ; he held them in the mighty grip of two of his hands. A bright dart graced the third and a huge peacock the fourth. Two others held to his mouth a mighty conch. He made the earth and the heavens resound with his shouts. He struck at the air with two other hands and disported himself on the mount. All beings trembled in wild affright and sought his protection, which was extended to them. He bent his bow and let fly his sharp shafts at the white mount. Krauncha, the son of Mount Himavan, bit the dust, riddled with the keen arrows of the marvellous boy. The other mountains acknowledged his power and offered him homage. All creatures rendered him joyful worship on the fifth day of that bright fortnight.

Dreadful portents were visible when the child was born. Those that dwelt in the forest of Chithraratha said "And this is what has come about of Agni violating the honor and chastity of the wives of the Seven Sages". But others who saw Swaha flying from the forest as an eagle time and oft, muttered, " That bird is at the bottom of this." But, none

suspected in the least that Swaha had anything to do with it. When the reports of the marvellous child reached her ears, she went to where he was and said to Skanda (for, so was he called, having been *dropped upon* the mount) "I am your mother." The Seven Rishis, when they came to know that a son was born unto them without their knowledge, grew wroth and put away their wives, all except Vasishtha. They were not to blame, seeing that they had the direct evidence of the dwellers of that forest to support them. It was in vain that Swaha went to them again and again and protested. "I am the mother of this child and your wives had nothing to do with it."

Now, Rishi Visvamithra was present during the sacrifice performed by the Seven Rishis. Unseen, he followed Agni when he disappeared into the forest, consumed by the pangs of unrequited affection. He knew all that happened. He was the first to seek the protection of Skanda. He composed a grand hymn in praise of Mahasena. It was he that performed the thirteen auspicious^krites of childhood for the boy. It was he that taught the world the glories of Skanda. It was he that instituted the cult and the worship of Skanda, of his cock, of his weapon Sakti and of his attendants. It was for the well-being of the world that he did so, and he became dear to the heart of Skanda in consequence. He acquainted the Six Sages with the facts of the case and emphatically declared that their wives were all innocent; but, their obstinacy was unshaken.

The gods approached Indra and said "This child gets to be intolerable. Vanquish him before he becomes too strong for you and drives you out of the three worlds". "But" replied Indra "what chance have I against this phenomenal child, who can, if he likes, destroy even the creator of this universe." "You are a paragon of valour and heroism" cried they in fine scorn "Let the Mothers of the worlds go to this

overgrown boy and kill him ; for, they can put up any amount of energy if they like." "Be it so" replied Indra, and set the Mothers on his dreaded foe. But, they observed his matchless might and their courage and brag oozed out at their heels. They sought his protection and humbly said "Our hearts go out to you in affection and love. Lo ! our breasts stream forth milk at the sight of your charming face. Be thou our son." Mahasena entertained them with due respect and complied with their request. Then he saw coming towards him Agni, his father. The boy duly honored his sire and was pleased to observe that Agni and the Mothers remained with him to attend upon him. The planets large and small, the Rishis, the Mothers, and numerous angelic hosts of terrible energy ever waited on the wonderful boy.

Then Indra and his celestial host appeared on the mount to do mortal battle with Skanda. But the flames of fire issuing from his mouth reduced to ashes the army of Indra, who threw themselves at the feet of the conqueror. Indra, finding himself deserted by his friends and troops, hurled his Vajra at Karthikeya. It pierced the right side of Guha and from it arose a golden hued youth with a mace in his hand. Visakha was he named, and at the sight of him Indra lost heart and sought the protection of the Son of Fire. He refused the Indraship offered to him by the Rishis and by the late holder of the office and was content to accept the place of the Leader of the Celestial hosts under Indra. Indra remembered the lady Devasena whom he had rescued from the Asura Kesi. He brought her unto Skanda and said "The great Brahma had ordained even before your birth that this lady should be your wife ;" and Devasena became the wedded wife of Skanda. The wives of the six Rishis sought his protection and were allowed to live with him as his

mothers. He brought about a happy union between Agni, his father and Swaha, his mother. Later on, he was commissioned by Mahadeva to destroy the brood of the impious Asuras and did his work thoroughly, sparing not.—*M. B. Vanaparva.* 225 to 234.

The Devas prayed to Paramasiva to retain his energy in his body. But Parvathi was wroth with them at having interfered and prevented her from begetting a son. "You shall never know what it is to be blessed with a son" cried she with a wounded heart. Now, a portion of the energy of Siva dropped by chance on the earth and grew into a big blazing fire. The Devas meanwhile, suffered grievously at the hands of Tharaka and sought the protection of Brahma who said to them "The curse launched against you affects not the God of fire who was not present on that fateful occasion. It is given to him to bring forth a son who will destroy Tharaka. The Will-aspect of the Lord is eternal and unfailing. A portion of it has fallen into the essence of the Fire-god. If he places it in the body of the Ganga, he will beget a son who will bring destruction upon the Asuras."

The Devas and the Rishis went after Agni, but could not come upon him. A frog pitied them in their difficulty and said "The God of fire whom you are after, lies concealed in the nether worlds among the waters. His flames blasted us and we were glad to escape here from them." Agni came to know that the frog had betrayed him and shot a curse at the whole class—"Your tongues shall lose all taste from this moment." He then hid himself in another more secure retreat. The Devas were touched with pity and contrition at the fate of the frogs that paid so dearly for having assisted them. "Well, it may be that your tongues lose all taste ; but you will be able to produce a large variety of sounds. Hunger may reduce you to a shadow and prostrate you unconscious, but you will draw of the essence

of the earth and live within it. The utter darkness of the night, that fills other creatures with dread, shall be no hindrance to you."

They sought Agni far and wide, when a lordly elephant said to them "He whom you are after is in yon Aswattha tree." Agni grew wroth at it and exclaimed—"Your tongues shall henceforth curve backwards"; and again concealed himself in a Sami tree. The Devas pitied the miserable fate of the elephants that so unselfishly assisted them and said "You will be able to eat every article of food. Your tongues will be capable of emitting certain indistinct sounds."

They looked for Agni here and there, high and low, until a parrot revealed to them, out of pity, the hiding place of the God of fire. Agni came to know of it and cursed the parrot kind.—"You lose your power of speech from now;" and he made their tongues curve upwards. But the Devas consoled them and said "You shall be able to utter the sound *Ka*. Your words shall be as sweet as the prattle of dear children." At last they came upon the God of fire in the Sami tree, which, along with the Aswattha, they declared to be the dwelling places of Agni and dedicated to religious purposes. The waters in the nether worlds, wherein abode Agni, are boiling even unto this day. (The Geysers or the boiling springs of Iceland).—*Ib. Anusasana-parva*, 131.

120. 12. *Arishtanemi* :—One of the names of Kas-yapa.

121. 4. *A lump of flesh*.—Gandhari, the wife of Dhritarashtra, was pregnant for long years; but, as she gave birth to no child, she hit herself on her stomach, with the result that a lump of flesh as hard as a ball of iron came out of her womb. Rishi Vyasa ordered cold water to be poured over it, when it separated itself into a hundred fragments. Trained nurses were appointed to watch over them in jars of clarified butter. After some time the vessels burst to pieces and strong

healthy children came forth from them.—*M. B. Adi-parva.*
129.

12. *Wicked son* :—He was a great Yogi in his former birth ; his nature and karmic affinities drew him on towards a life of calm meditation in the deep forests, untouched by the cares of state. He wanted to force his father and his people to drive him out of the town and hit upon the novel expedient of throwing the children of the citizens into the Sarayu. When Sagara sent him away from the capital, he brought back the children whom he had hidden from men's eyes by his yogic power.

122. 1. *Vindhya* :—The celebraeted temple of Vindhya-vasini or Goddess of Vindhya, stands near Mirzapur on the Ganga. It is clear therefore that the name was applied, as at present, to the whole range from the valley of the Narmada to the basin of the Ganga.—*Geography of Ancient India*.

Holiest spot :—The country to the north of the sea and to the south of the Himalaya is the Bharatha-varsha.—*V. P. II. 3.* The following divisions of India are noticed in Hemachandra Kosa, IV. 14, mostly founded on the second chapter of Manu :—

1. Northern India, called Aryavartha or Janma-bhoomi or Jina-chakri (Circle of Buddhas) or Punya-bhoo (holy land) or Achara-vedi (the land of rites and customs), between the Himalayas and the Vindhyas.

2. Central India or Madhya-desa, between Prayaga (Allahabad) on the east and Vinasana on the west (where the Sarasvathi loses itself in the deserts of Bhatner)—*M. B. Vana-parva* 82.

• 3. Gangetic Doab, called Anthar-vedi (inner land) or Samasthali (plains), between the Ganges and the Yamuna—*Bala Ramayana X* ; (Trikandasesha reads Kusasthali.)

4. Brahmavartha or divine land, between the Sarasvathi and the Drishadvathi (Caggar).

5. Kurukshethra or battle-field of the Kurus, called also Brahma Vedi (Brahma's altar) and Dharmakshetra (holy field), between the five tanks of Parasu Rama, extending for twelve yojanas or 60 miles.

[A yojana is also 8 miles which will give 96 miles, the modern limit of the circle (Cunningham p. 332). It will be seen from the above that Kurukshetra and Brahma-vartha are not identical as General Cunningham supposes.]

6. Eastern provinces or south-eastern India.

7. Northern provinces or north-western India up to the Saravathi (Choya river).

8. Mlechha-desa or Mandala (barbaric land) or countries bordering on India. Southern India or the Dakshinapatha is not included in this list, as it originally formed part of Mlechha-desa.—*Geography of Ancient India*.

21. So :—It must be some one of the Devas who have done this—*Thilaka*. Sagara wanted to become Indra and performed a hundred Aswamedhas to get the place. Indra made away with the horse during the hundredth sacrifice.

124. 9. *Rasathala* :—Underneath the earth are the seven Pathalas—Athala, Vithala, Suthala, Thalathala, Mahathala, Rasathala and Pathala. They are 10,000 Yojanas apart from one another. Daithyas, Danavas and Nagas dwell in these nether Swargas. Their enjoyments, powers and luxuries are even greater than those of the Devas in Swarga. Their houses, halls, gardens and playgrounds are very gorgeous. They are ever joyous and are much attached to their wives, sons, friends and attendants. By the grace of the Lord they have their desires always gratified. Maya, the architect of the Danavas, has built for them wonderful houses, palaces and gardens of dazzling splendour and rare beauty. There are no divisions of time and no disturbances from such divisions, as the sun's rays do not enter those regions. All darkness is removed by the light

of the precious stones on the crowns of the Serpent-kings. The people of the Pathala use divine herbs and medicines and consequently they have no infirmities, diseases, old age, bad odour, perspiration or loss of brilliance etc. They have no death except by the Chakra of the Lord (the Wheel of Time).

Athala :—Bala, the son of Maya, resides here. He has created 96 forms of illusion, to some of which only modern magicians have still recourse to. When he yawns, three classes of women spring into existence. 1. Svarini, (self-willed loose women) 2. Kamini (passionate women) and 3. Pumschali (unchaste women). If any one enters Athala, they completely allure him by their golden charms and when the man is under their power, he exclaims “I am Easwara ; I am a Siddha.” (These women symbolise so many inferior and undesirable psychic powers).

Vithala :—is below Athala. Bhava (Siva), the lord of gold (Hatakesvara), reigns there in company with Bhavani, (Parvati) attended by the Bhoothas (elementals). He is engaged in warding off the evils of humanity. His contact and connexion with Bhavani gives rise to a river called Hataki (golden). The God of fire kindled by Vayu, the lord of air, absorbs that river and gives it out as Hataka, the gold used by the Asuras who dwell there.

Suthala :—Bali, the son of Virochana, has his abode here. Vamana, the incarnation of Vishnu, took away the Triloki from him and placed him here, keeping watch and ward at his gate. His enjoyments and powers are greater than those of Indra. He is free of all sin and is ever centred in the observance of his own dharma and the service of the Lord.

Thalathala :—Maya, the Danava king, rules here. His three puras or abodes were destroyed by Siva, who is hence called Tripurar. But, Siva admitted him into his favour

and placed him here. He is the master of all magicians, and being under the special protection of Siva, has no fear from the chakra of Vishnu. (Bali and Maya, Triloki and Tripura, the seizure of the one and the destruction of the other, the restoration of Bali to Suthala and of Maya to Thalathala, the favour shown to them in those regions, and the correspondences of Suthala and Thalathala are worth careful consideration. In the case of one, Vishnu or the preservative aspect of the Second Purusha is the actor, and in the other, Siva, the destructive aspect.)

Mahathala :—Many headed serpents, fierce and huge, the progeny of Kadru and Kasyapa, dwell here. The chief amongst them are Kuhaka, Thakshaka, Kaleeya, Sushena, and others. They are always afraid of Garuda, the carrier of Vishnu and seldom venture outside on pleasure excursions.

Rasathala :—Daithyas, Danavas, Panis named Nivatha-kavachas and Kalakeyas, the dwellers of Hiranyapura, reside here. They are the enemies of gods and of immense natural might. They tremble at the sound of the mantras uttered by Sarama, the bitch-messenger of Indra. The energy of the Lord quells their strength and pride and they dwell there like snakes in their holes.

Pathala :—Vasuki and other serpent-kings dwell there along with Sankha, Gulika, Maha-sankha, Swetha, Dhritharashtra, Sankha-chooda, Kambala, Aswathara, Devadatta, and other great Nagas. Some have five heads, some six, some seven, some ten, some hundred and some a thousand. The brilliance of the gems on their hoods dispel all darkness.—*Bh. V. 24.*

10. *Viroopaksha* :—Eight huge elephants support the earth in each quarter—Airavatha, Pundareeka, Vamana, Kumuda, Anjana, Pushpadanta, Sarvabhauma and Suprathieeka. Their wives are known as Abhramu, Kapila,

Pingala, Anupama, Thamraparni, Subhradanthy, Angana, Anjanavathi—*Amarakosa, Dikvarga.* Airavatha, Vamana, Anjana and Sarvabhauma correspond to Viroopaksha, Mahapadma, Saumanasa, and Bhadra in the text.

32. *Kapila* :—1. The Devas complained to the Lord Kapila, who promised to slay at no distant time the sons of Sagara.

2. Some one made away with the sacrificial horse through a chasm in the earth. The sons of Sagara followed the trail and came to it, from which they dug down to the Pathala, each to the distance of a yojana.

3. The Lord Kapila said to Amsuman “Child ! Take his horse to your grand-father ; ask of me what boon you may desire. Your grand-son will have the honor of bringing down to earth the celestial Ganga.” Then Amsuman clasped his hands and said “Lord ! My uncles, who out of ignorance and temerity offended you, are now a heap of ashes. May they rise to the abodes of the blessed.” “Be it so” replied Kapila “they will be purified by the contact with the waters of the Ganga when it should come to the earth”—*V. P. III. 4.*

Kardama, the son of Brahma was commissioned by his father to increase and multiply. For long years he sat in meditation at the holy spot Bindusaras on the banks of the Sarasvathi. The Lord Vishnu appeared to him and said “I know the wish of thy heart. The Manu Swayambhuva will offer you in marriage his daughter Devahoothi. Nine daughters and a son will be your progeny in the world. I will take birth of you as your son and teach the eternal wisdom to humanity.” Accordingly his girls Kala, Anasooya, Sraddha, Havarbhoo, Gathi, Kriya, Khyathi, Arundhathi and Santhi married the patriarchs Mareechi, Athri, Angiras, Pulasthya, Pulaha, Krathu, Bhrigu, Vasishtha and Atharva. He reverenced his son Kapila as the incarnation of the

Lord Vishnu and with his permission, retired to the forest. One day Devahoothi approached Kapila and said, "Instruct me, out of thy infinite wisdom, in the mysteries of life and being." And Kapila expounded to her the Sankhya and the Yoga schools of philosophy with special reference to the Path of Devotion. Devahoothi profited by the teachings of her son and passed into eternal peace. Kapila took leave of his mother and proceeded north-east to the shores of the ocean who reverently afforded him an abode, where he remains for all time in profound meditation for the welfare of the worlds.—*Bh.* III. 21 to 33.

1. But it is said that Kapila remained for long ages in deep meditation at Haridwar, where Ganga issues from the Himalayas. It may be that the sea might have extended up to that spot in those times. Even now, sea-shells are found in some parts of the mountain.

2. Kapila taught the Sankhyasastra to Devahoothi. He is the reputed author of the Sankhya-soothras, which are now almost lost. Some hold that there were many Rishis of that name and that the first taught the science, while the last crystallised it into soothras. The *Bh.* expresses the following opinion about Kapila's consuming the sons of Sagara. "It is not right to hold this view. The Lord Kapila, an embodiment of Satva (harmony) that purifies and protects the universe, could not be conceived as possessing the Tamasic element of anger in his nature. The clear sky cannot be soiled with dust. The Lord of Compassion, who gave humanity the Sankhya yoga with which to cross the ocean of births and deaths, has nothing in common with the vulgar attributes of passion and anger." But, such incidents in the puranas, that speak of the anger of the Lord and the curses of the Rishis, ought not to be understood in the same light as similar events occurring in the lives of ordinary mortals, whose feet are

deep in the mire of ignorance and illusion. The great souls whose every thought and word and deed tend towards the supreme welfare of the worlds, reach that sublime height through the golden steps of purification, the first of which is the utter absence of love and hate. Anger approaches them not who have stood face to face with the Supreme Mystery and have become one with It. They are but the Lords of Karma who adjust the results without regard to time, place and circumstances. They but pronounce the decrees of the great Law. The judge who is the mouth-piece of the law of his country, has no joy or sorrow in connexion with the judgments he pronounces on those that are brought before him.

3. Kapila is one of the 24 Leelavataras of Mahavishnu.
—*Bh.* II. 7.

Hardwar is situated on the right bank of the Ganges at the southern base of the Siwalik mountains. This is the Gangadwara of Sanskrit writers. The Ganges here rushes into the plains through a gorge of the Siwalik range and this agrees with the description of Gangadwara in the Kathasaritsagara (III). Gangadwara is always associated with Kanakhala, a village near Hardwar. It was probably also the name of the surrounding mountains. Near Kanakhala was Kapila-theertha, which is still pointed out as Kapila-sthana (*M. B. Vanaparva.* 84.)—*Geography of Ancient India.*

1. Siddheswar is a village at the foot of the Sarasapur Range, which forms the boundary between the districts of Kachar, Sylhet, and Assam on the south or the left bank of the river Barak. There is a celebrated Hindu temple here, and in the month of March an annual fair is held, attended by about three thousand persons. At the same time a religious gathering for bathing takes place on the opposite bank of the river. The place is traditionally stated to have been the abode of the famous Rishi Kapila Muni, a fellow-worker of

Patanjali, the founder of one of the six systems of Hindu philosophy. The nearest railway station is Badarpur, on the Assam-Bengal Railway, 252 miles from Chittagong.

2. Hardwar is a sacred town of great antiquity and has borne many names. The name of Haridwara (Vishnu-gate) seems to be of comparatively modern origin. Its earlier name Mayapura is connected with Sivite worship rather than with any form of Vishnu. Abul Fazl, in the time of Akbar, speaks of Maya or Haridwara on the Ganges being sacred ground for 36 miles in length. In the next reign, Tom Coryat visited the place and described it as Haradwara, the capital of Siva. A dispute exists to this day between the followers of Siva and Vishnu as to which of them gave birth to the Ganges. Both quote the *V. P.* which ascribes the Ganges to Vishnu and the Alakananda, its eastern branch, to Siva. The Sivites name it Haradwara and the Vaishnavites Haridwara. It was however a scene of sacred rites long before Sivism or Vaishnavism developed their present forms. As the spot where the Ganges issues forth on its fertilising career, Hardwara obtained the veneration of each of the religions of India and preserves the memorials alike of Buddhism, Sivism and Vishnuism and of rites perhaps earlier than any of them.

It was also known as Kapila or Gupila, from the sage Kapila, who passed his life in religious austerities at the spot still pointed out as *Kapilasthan*. Hieun Thsang, the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, in the seventh century visited a city which he calls "Mo-yu-lo" and the remains of which still exist at "Mayapur," a little to the south of the modern town. The temples generally visited by pilgrims are—

- (a) Chandi-pahar on the left bank of the Ganges.
- (b) The temple of Mayadevi.
- (c) The modern temple of Saravanath.

The great object of attraction at the present day is the "Hari-ke-charan" or "Har-ki-pari" Ghat. This is the principal bathing ghat with the adjoining temple of "Gangadwara." The "Charan" or foot-mark of Vishnu is imprinted on a stone let into the upper wall of the ghat and forms an object of special reverence. The great assemblage of pilgrims takes place on the first day of the month of Baisakh, the commencement of the Hindu solar year (March-April) and the anniversary of the day upon which the Ganges first appeared upon the earth. Every 12th year, the planet Jupiter being then in Aquarius, a feast of peculiar sanctity occurs, known as *Kumbha Mela*, which is attended by an enormous concourse of people. Holy Dakhanti, Dasehra Jeth, and Katki Puno fairs are held about a mile from Hardwar in March, April and June and November. Attendance 6,000, 10,000, 8000 and 5,000.

Harwar is 931 miles from Calcutta and 49 miles from Saharanpore.

126. 30. *No good* :—These were inordinately proud of their might and committed sins for which no adequate penances are laid down in the scriptures. "Those that meet their death through outcasts, water, serpents, lightning, Brahmanas, wild beasts, elephants and horses benefit nothing by libations of water and offerings of balls of food." Sins beyond the reach of the penances instituted by Manu and the other sacred law-givers are purged by the touch of the holy Ganga.

127. 1. *Take* :—Kapila gave back the sacrificial horse to him and instructed him as the future steps he ought to take.—*Kamba Ramayana*.

4. *Acquainted* :—He learnt it through fleet messengers—*Kamba Ramayana*. Barhi-kethu (Asamanjas, Su-kethu, Dharma-ratha and Pancha-vana were the sole survivors of Sagara's sons.—*Vayu-purana* 88.

128. 8 *Dileepa* :—One day he was coming back in a great hurry to his palace, as he had to fulfil a sacred duty by his wife who had bathed after her courses and was pure. His thoughts were far away and he did not espy Kama-dhenu, the Cow of Plenty, lying on the road ; nor did he pay it the reverence due. The result was a curse of barrenness. Later on, he came to know of it through his guru Vasishtha and begged piteously for some means that would avert the miserable fate. He was enjoined to tend all carefully the calf of the Kama-dhenu that abode in his guru's asrama. Accordingly Dileepa and his queen Sudeshna waited upon the holy calf and never quitted it for a moment. One day, a lion sprang upon it all in a sudden and do what he might, Dileepa and his weapons failed to make any impression on the marvellous beast. He hung his head down in utter dejection, when the animal laughed loud and said “ Ransom this precious calf of thine with another life equally precious.” Dileepa joyfully offered himself as the like-iest substitute, when the lion vanished from sight and there tood before him one of the glorious attendants on Mahadava. “ Kumbhodara am I named ” said he graciously “ I am entrusted with the task of looking after the elephants hereabouts so dear to my royal mistress. I but gauged thy spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice to your charge. And splendidly have you stood the test.” Then Sudeshna drank of the milk of the calf Nandini, directed thereto by Vasistha, and gave birth to the royal Raghu. Dileepa performed 99 Aswamedhas and was busy with the hundredth ; when Indra, apprehending danger to his place, made away with the sacrificial horse. Raghu followed him and fought with him tirelessly until the Deva-raja, mightily pleased with his valour and prowess, conferred upon Dileepa the merits of the sacrifice—*Raghuvamsa*.

Dileepa, the son of Raghu referred to above, seems to be quite a different person. *Thilaka.*

12. *Resolved*:—Vasishtha gave him the necessary directions to bring Ganga down to the earth. He left the government in the hands of his minister Sumanthra and retired to the forests—*Kamba Ramayana*.

13. *Gokarna*:—A holy spot at the foot of the Himalayas.

“But it appears to me that the holy island of Rameswara is the same as the celebrated Gokarna of the ancient writers. Both are in the southern ocean (*Raghuvamsa VII*) ; both are sacred to Siva (*M. B. Vanaparva* 85) ; both have holy lakes (*Ib. 88*) ; [“Near the town of Rameswaram is a fresh water lake about 3 miles in circumference”—*Thornton*]. While Gokarna occurs so frequently among old writers, no notice is found of Rameswara. It occurs in some of the puranas such as Matsya, but is not found in the *Ramayana* or the *Maha Bharata*”—*Geography of Ancient India*.

15. *Austerities* :—He clad himself in deer-skin and he barks of trees and fed upon dry leaves. During the first month, he ate once in three days ; during the second, once in six ; during the third, once in a for night ; during the fourth, the air was his only sustenance, while he stood upon his toes, with his arms lifted high over his head.—*M.B. Vana-parva*. 38.

130. 15. *Seven streams* :—There is a river named Vishnu-padi in the upper regions of the world of gods. When the Lord Vishnu incarnated as Vamana and measured the world in three strides, his right toe nail broke through the upper covering of the world-egg ; and the waters that flowed into it in consequence were known as Vishnu-padi. Its contact with the Lord's feet endowed it with the property of cleansing all sins. Dhruva reverently bears it on his head during the twilights. The Seven Rishis proudly display it on their matted coils of hair as the *summum bonum* of all their efforts. It passes through the world of the celestial

hosts to the regions of the Moon. From there it falls on the abode of Brahma, where it adorns the mount Meru. There it divides itself into four streams Seetha, Alakananda, Chakshus and Bhadra, and flows on all sides to the ocean. The Seetha descends upon the mountains adjoining the Meru, passes by the peaks Kumuda and Kukura, reaches down to Mount Gandhamadana and falls into the salt ocean in the east through the Bhadrasva-varsha. The Chakshus falls from the peaks of the Malyavan, and flows into the salt ocean on the west through the Kethumala-varsha. The Bhadra flows north from the Meru on to the peaks of Mount Sringavan and falls into the salt ocean on the north through the Uttharakuru-varsha. The Alakananda flows south from the world of Brahma on to the mountains Hemakoota and Himakoota and flows into the salt ocean on the south through the Bharatha-varsha—*Bh.* V. 17.

Ganga, which is explained in the Niruktha to mean flowing, is so called after the confluence of the Bhageerathi with the eastern feeder Alakananda at Deva-prayag. The last is formed by the junction at Vishnu-prayaga of the Dauli (Davali) flowing from the north-east and the Bishanganga (Vishnu-ganga) flowing from the north-west. On the right bank of the last, a few miles below its source, is situated the celebrated Badrinath (Badarinatha), the reputed abode of Nara and Narayana. The place takes its name from an old Badari (jujube tree) and is now famous for its temple. (*M. B. Vanaparva* 145). Near it is a thermal spring called Thaptha-kunda, which might probably be the Bindusaras mentioned in it. The mounts Mainaka and Hiranya-sikhara mentioned in the reference are probably the lofty ranges which guard Badarinatha on the east and west. In the Ramayana (VI. 56) the Rishabha is called the golden mountain and Hiranya-sikhara is probably one of its descriptive names.

Alakananda is joined at Rudra-prayaga on the right side by the Mandakini, which rises in the south-west faces of the Kedara-natha mountain. *Amarakosa* calls it the celestial river. In the *Vanaparva*, 142, one of the feeders, probably the Vishnu-ganga, is called by that name Akasa-ganga ; but in the Prasthana-parva it seems to be rightly applied to the Mandakini. The temple of Kedara-natha is still frequented by thousands of Hindu pilgrims ; and near it is a deep precipice called Bhairava-jhampa from which people are still said to precipitate themselves.

The Bhageerathi rises in the mountains of Ghurwal and after a course of about 8 miles, emerges at Gangothri (Gang-adri) from under a great thick snow-bed lying between lofty mountains. "From the brow of this curious wall of snow" observes an able writer "and immediately above the outlet of the stream, large and hoary icicles depend." These are considered by Hindus as the matted hair of Siva through which, according to the Ramayana, it flowed into the earth. Seven miles below, it is joined at Bhairava-sangama by the Jahnavi, which rises in the southern base of the culminating range of the Himalayas. This is considered one of the grandest awe-inspiring places in the world. "The appearance that the ruins of a Gothic cathedral," says the explorer Hodgson, "might have to a spectator within them, supposing that thunderbolts and earthquakes have rifted its lofty and massive towers, spires and buttresses, the parts left standing then might, in miniature, give an idea of the rocks of Bhairavagathi."

About 50 miles below Deva-prayaga, at Haridwara, the Ganga finally enters the plains of Hindustan. In the plains of Bengal, some miles above Moorshadabad, the Ganges divides into two channels, the bigger left branch being called Padma or Padmavathi (*Madhava-chamfu*, 3) and the right or the west branch Bhageerathi, which,

in the lowest portion, is now eclipsed by the English name of Hugli.—*Geography of Ancient India.*

A great fair is held at Sagar in the Magha Sankranthi (February). Sagar is reached from Calcutta by steamer.

Bhairoghati :—A temple and pass in Garhwal state, United Provinces, at the confluence of the Bhageerathi and Janhavi, in a deep gorge confined within perpendicular walls of granite; it is considered a place of great sanctity and is visited by Hindu pilgrims from all parts of India. This place is reached from Hardwar station on the Oudh and Rohilkhand Railway.

Gangothri :—A mountain temple in Garhwal state, United Provinces; it stands on the right bank of the Bhageerathi or Ganges. The mouth of the Ganges at Gangasagar and its source at Gangothri are considered peculiarly sacred. There is a temple 8 miles from the source of the river, which contains the images of Ganga, Bhageeratha and others. The pilgrims regard it as the limit of their journey and as there are no houses in the neighbourhood, they soon leave, taking a flask of water from the river.—*Traveller's Companion.*

Soron :—A town in Kasganj Tahsil, Etah District, United Provinces, situated on the Burh Ganga or the ancient bed of the river Ganga. It is 27 miles from Etah town north-east, on the Bareilly-Hathras road. About 2 miles from Soron, on the bank of a small stream, is the place where Rishi Bhageeratha performed thapas for thousands of years. Soron, on the Rohilkhand-Kumayoon Railway, is 55 miles from Bareilly, 162 miles from Cawnpur and 102 miles from Agra Fort.

M.B. gives the names of the seven streams as Vasvauka-sara, Nalini, Pavani, Ganga, Seetha, and Jamboonadi ; V.P. II.

8 relates that Mahadeva bore but the Alakananda on his head and that the sons of Sagara were purified thereby.

132. 3. *Through his ears* :—They are considered purer than the other parts of a man's body—*Go*.

4. *Janhu* :—An ancestor of the Kusikas. His sons were the favourites of the Aswini-devathas.—*Rig Veda*. I. 116 ; III. 58.

The Brahmapurana and the Harivamsa make him the husband of Kaveri, the daughter of king Yuvanaswa of the solar race. He cursed her to become a river for some act of carelessness.

8. *Difficulties* :—He prayed to Brahma for 6,000 years and directed by him, spent another 6,000 years in seeking to propitiate Mahadeva. Ganga appeared to him only after 5,000 years of earnest prayer and said "Make sure that Mahadeva is willing to bear my current." So he had to pray another 2,500 years to Sankara. Later on, when Ganga disappeared among the matted hair of Siva, he had to pray to him another 2,000 years before he could get her out of it.—*Kamba Ramayana*. But, Thilaka is of opinion that Ganga was under the power of the Lord's illusion and fancied herself on the surface of his matted hair when she was really in the centre of it and *vice versa*. So, the Puranas and the Itihasas relate that Ganga was but a manifestation of the illusion of the Lord. It could never have any feeling of pride, nor could Mahadeva entertain any desire to put down the egotism of Ganga ; nor could she be under an illusion. Hence, the wise teachers tell us that he who regards the Lord Siva and the Ganga on his head as different stands no chance of Liberation. But, this too might be another play acted for our benefit, akin to the mutual relations of Vishnu and Siva, who are said to fight with and pray to each other.

133. 30. *Episode* :—1. The Lord Siva appeared to

King Sagara and said " You prayed to me at a peculiar moment and in consequence, one of your queens will be the mother of 60,000 sons. Of wonderful strength and might, they will become tall with pride and meet with death all together when they least expect it. But, another of your queens will give birth to a son who will perpetuate your line on earth." Accordingly, the princess of Vidarbha was delivered of a big gourd, while the princess of the line of Sibi was the mother of a beautiful boy. Sagara was about to throw away the gourd, when a voice from heaven said to him, "Stop, you do ill to throw away your children. Take the seeds from this gourd and preserve them with care in vessels filled with clarified butter. It is the will of Mahadeva that your sons be born this way. Oppose it not." The boys were of matchless strength and ranged the worlds, causing great havoc to the dwellers thereof.

2. The sacrificial horse was going its rounds, the sons of Sagara keeping watch over it ; but, it disappeared all on a sudden when it reached the sea-shore. They searched far and wide and came upon a deep chasm in the earth and went down it, excavating deeper and deeper.

3. Narada informed Sagara of their being reduced to ashes by the anger of Kapila.

4. Amsuman saluted Kapila and found favour in his eyes. "Ask of me what you will " said the sage. " May my lord be pleased " prayed he " to give me the sacrificial horse to take back, that my grand-father's Yagna be completed. May my uncles attain happy worlds hereafter ".

5. His sons dug the ocean that formed the abode of Varuna, and in consequence, was adopted by him as his son
—M. B. Vanaparva 104 to 109.

Many tribes and nations were conquered by Sagara. The Yavanas were ordered to shave their heads completely ; the Sakas grow the hair on the back of their heads, but

shave the front ; the Paradas allow their hair and beard to grow, and the Pahlavas grow but their beard. They were debarred from sacrifices to the fire, from the study of the holy books, and from other duties laid down for the castes and the orders of life. They were outcasted by the Brahmanas, and became the various mlechha nations scattered all over the globe. The Yavanas, of whom the Greeks are a branch, shave their heads in front. The Sakas, the Chinese and the inhabitants of Tartary do likewise and plait their hair in long pig-tails ; they allow it to hang loose or roll it up in coils at the back of their head. Those that live on the Himalayas and the countries adjoining it, allow but a small tuft of hair to stand on their heads. The men of Syria, Germany and other countries grow their hair long. The Persians shave their heads and grow their beards.—*V.P. IV.*

Ganga found it impossible to bear the weight of the Brahmanas who assembled to partake of the bounties of king Sagara at his sacrifices and cried to him to save her. She threw herself on his lap and was consoled only after he promised to make her his daughter.—*M.B. Dronaparva*, 60.

134. 21. *Cross* :—The party were about to enter the boat that was to convey them to the other bank, when the boatman respectfully stopped Rama and said “Holy sir ! Be pleased to wash your feet clean of any speck of dust.” Viswamithra looked surprised and said “How is this ? What have you against Rama that you should worry him so?” “Nay, reverend sir!” replied the boatman “I hear that Ahalya, who lay in the hermitage of Gautama for untold ages as a shapeless stone cursed thereunto by her husband in his wrath, was transformed into the loveliest of women. And the dust of this prince’s feet fell on her. Now, I have a wife and a large family to feed, and but this frail boat to do it with. It needs no ghost to tell me that the dust which metamorphosed a slab into a woman, would not fail to do

it sooner when it has a piece of wood to operate upon. Just imagine to yourselves what would become of me with two wives and a correspondingly large family to feed and with not even this boat to help me do it." Viswamithra could not admire sufficiently the deep devotion of the man towards Rama that was so thinly veiled by his quaint humour.

They crossed over to the other bank, when Rama took a costly ring from his finger and offered it to the boatman as his hire. He drew back with a well-feigned air of surprise and pain and cried " Well, what is this ? Very nice, truly. And so, things have come to such a pass when those in the same profession take fees from one another for services rendered." Viswamithra was mystified or appeared to be so. " Which of us is the professional boatman ? I do not remember ever having rowed a boat in my life. Perhaps, this fellow might have come upon the royal youths when they were amusing themselves on the waters of the Ganga on some pleasure excursion." Lakshmana said to himself " Ho, ho ! It seems that my brother manages to amuse himself with boating all unknown to myself, though I am never away from him. And this man is perhaps his trainer or instructor. Else how could he have known this most curious trait about my brother." But Viswamithra put an end to their suspense by asking the boatman " Pray, enlighten us as to which of us is the professional." And to them replied the boatman " Holy sir ! This Rama, whom you see here, is the head of our profession. I am but a novice in the art and occupy but the very lowest ranks. I take the travellers that come here in my boat and enable them to cross this broad river and reach the other bank. But, this Master-boatman takes the countless souls in the universe into the capacious boat of his Sacred Feet and rows them over the perilous waters of the Ocean of

births and deaths on to the happy shores of Liberation. If I ferry him over now and take no hire for it, he will place it to my account and ferry me over in his boat freely and without charge. It is but the etiquette of our profession to give or take no hire for services rendered among us." The hearers were mightily pleased with the man's curious conceits and unparalleled devotion—*A. R.* III. (This would place the crossing of the Ganga after Rama's visit to the hermitage of Gauthama.)

25. *Visala* :—To the north of Magadha lay the republic of Vaisali, the modern Basara. It was a celebrated town in the time of Buddha (Lalitha-visthara); and is said to have been founded by King Visala, with whose name is connected its old ruined fort Raja-Bisalka-gar. The position of this place may be inferred from Rama's journey, as he passed a night here after crossing the Ganges before he arrived at his destination. General Cunningham arrives at the same conclusion from the description of Hieun Thsang's journey. We are therefore sure that the popular tradition identifying Besara with Vaisali is perfectly correct.

This is probably the land of Vrijis, who are mentioned by Panini (IV. 2. 131). This fact is expressly mentioned in a Buddhist legend quoted from Burnouf by General Cunningham (p. 444) and also in the passage on p. 28, Beal's Life of Buddha. In the *Sabha-parva* (30), Bheema is said to have met the Sarmakas and Varmakas before he went to Videha. They are evidently some of the tribes who inhabited this country. It probably extended from Bagmati or Boghavati river on the east to beyond the Gandaki river on the west; in other words, it comprises the modern districts of Mozafarpur and Saran,—*Geography of Ancient India*.

135. 3. *Dithi* :—The wife of Kasyapa, daughter of the Patriarch Daksha and mother of Hiranya-kasipu, Hiranyaksha, and other Daithyas.

7. *Resolved* :—Once upon a time, Rishi Durvasas, the son of Athri, was ranging through the worlds, when a Vidyadhara lady came along with a garland in her hand of the flowers of heavenly fragrance. He requested it of her and the nymph was overjoyed to be allowed to offer it to the great Rishi. Durvasas wore it on his head and was passing through Swarga, when, as Fate would have it, he met Indra and his Devas coming towards him. Out of the love and friendliness that filled his heart towards the wielder of Vajra, he removed the garland from off his head and gave it to the Devaraja. But, Indra was blinded by his pride and conceit and threw it lightly round the head of his elephant Airavatha. A natural desire and curiosity to understand and analyse, as well as he could, the slight thing that rested on his massive head and caused him a slight irritation, prompted it to reach up its trunk for the garland ; it tore it to pieces and trampled it under his feet. Durvasas blazed with wrath at this wanton insult to him and cried “ Wretched fool ! You call yourself the Ruler of the Devas ? Your high dignity has made your heart big with pride and has blinded your eyes to right and wrong. Are you fool enough to think that you are given a free hand to do as you like ? I gave this garland to you in all love and friendliness, knowing it to be a sure passport to the favour of the goddess Lakshmi. And you thought it beneath your high dignity to accept this trifle at the hands of a poor Brahmana like myself ? You did right throwing it to your elephant. Well, you showed me not due reverence ; you received not this garland with due humility and thanked me in return ; you placed it not on your head with a deep feeling of veneration and joy. You have no place in the world of gods. Your wealth and power and glory go away from you.” Indra shook like an aspen before the terrible storm of wrath. He laid his head at the feet of the irate

sage and cried out in the agony of his terror and grief "Lord ! Holy One! I humbly entreat you to forgive me my heinous crime." But Durvasas turned away from him as from a thing loathsome, and exclaimed "My heart knows no mercy towards you. Forgiveness is foreign to my nature where you are concerned. Gauthama has dealt but lightly with you and has thereby unwittingly encouraged you in the Path of Unrighteousness. Your heart has been bloated with pride at the praises so lavishly bestowed upon you by Vasishtha and the other Rishis. They have indirectly contributed not a little to set you up to insult such as I. I have had enough of you. Avaunt !"

From that moment, the three worlds and their ruler Indra lost their vigour and energy and lustre. Trees, plants, creepers and medicinal herbs withered miserably. Yagas and Yagnas were a thing of the past. The forests afforded no welcome retreat for the Rishis of stern thapas and holy vows. Charity, sympathy, benevolence and holy studies were abandoned. All beings moved about listlessly and with ever-waning life. For, vitality and righteousness, virtue and prosperity, vigour and devotion go hand in hand. The Mother of Mercy turned her face away from the three worlds ; the Daithyas and the Danavas took advantage of this and fell upon the Devas and drove them out from the Swarga. Utterly broken in spirit, they sought refuge with Brahma. He noticed that the worlds were enveloped in the black pall of unrighteousness ; the Regents were shorn of their lustre and were drained of their vigour ; the Asuras shone with unwonted fulgence and energy. He meditated for a while upon the Lord of all and said to the Devas "The Almighty utilises the three gunas of Sathwa, Rajas and Thamas to evolve, to preserve and to withdraw the universe. The present is an extremely favourable occasion for the work of preservation. He is now dominated by the quality

of Sathwa and is intent upon the good of the worlds. Let us seek his feet in devout adoration. He will do what is good for us."

Accordingly they repaired unto the shores of the milky ocean and with humble hearts and reverent, prayed to the Fountain of Mercy. He manifested himself unto them and said, "Shining Ones! The Asuras are now in power, having secured the help and guidance of Sukra. It is well for you to be on good terms with them until your days of darkness and misery pass away. The Waters of Immortality bring back even the dead to life. So, ally yourselves with the Asuras, the Daithyas and the Danavas ; churn the Ocean of Milk ; throw into it all the medicinal plants in the world ; let Mount Mandara be your churning stick and the Naga Vasuki, your rope ; toil on unceasingly until you come upon Amritha. Promise your colleagues to give them half of it and thus secure their help and active co-operation. Allure them by enchanting descriptions of the virtues of it. 'Death flees from him who has tasted of the marvellous Waters ; his strength and his might, his courage and his valor know no bounds.' Many a rare and precious thing may come out of the ocean while you are churning it; but you should keep your hearts away from them. May be a dread poison Halahala will come out of it, consuming all. Fear not ; I will be with you and see that you come to no harm at the hands of your enemies; it shall be my care that they get nothing for their pains."

Accordingly the gods approached King Bali, and Indra unfolded to him his scheme for churning the ocean and getting the Amritha. They were convinced and allured by his eloquent words ; and the Asuras agreed to the terms. Gods and demons uprooted the great golden mount Mandara and bore it to the Ocean of Milk. But, they sank exhausted at a very early part of their journey ; countless gods

and Asuras were crushed and mangled as the huge mass fell. Then the Lord Vishnu came there and infused into them fresh life and energy ; he took up the vast mount on his Garuda and reached the shores of the ocean along with the Devas and the Asuras. All the medicinal herbs in the world, all roots and leaves and drugs of wonderful properties were carefully gathered and thrown into the waters. Vasuki the Naga, coiled himself round the mount, on being promised a share in the Amritha. The Lord Vishnu and the Devas took hold of its head, whereupon the Asuras flared up and exclaimed, " Who are we that we should put up with such an insult as this ? We have mastered the Vedas ; we have explored the depths of sastraic lore ; and as to character and observances, we stand unrivalled. We will not be shamed by taking hold of the tail of the serpent." The Lord smiled with extreme affability and replied " Please yourselves. We are content to give way to you and stand at the tail-end."

Then the Devas and the Asuras set themselves in right earnest to churn the Ocean of Milk ; but, the mount Mandara was too heavy and sank to the bottom, as it had nothing to keep it in its place. Their hearts too sank at this unexpected calamity and they raised their voices in piteous appeal to the Lord Vishnu. They found favour in His eyes ; He rose from the depths of the ocean as a huge tortoise with the sunk mountain on His back. His hands clasped it firm, while He assumed another form and churned along with the Devas and the Asuras. In yet another form was He seen on the top of the mountain, inciting all to unremitting efforts. A stream of His energy coursed through Vasuki, increasing a million-fold his strength and endurance. Another stream kept the Devas to the highest point of efficiency and work. Then, Vasuki the Naga, could bear it no more; deadly poison, smoke and

flames issued from his countless mouths. The Asuras, who foolishly contended for a place near his head, were scorched and shrivelled thereby ; it drained them of their life ; and many swooned right away. The clouds were chased by his mighty breaths on to where the Devas stood and rained cool refreshing showers upon their wearied frames. Long did they toil and earnestly, when Halahala, the dread poison, appeared, consuming the worlds and everything in them animate and inanimate. The Patriarchs, the gods and the Asuras turned terror-stricken looks to mount Kailasa, where abode Mahadeva, the Lord of Supreme Compassion. Him they took refuge in and praised high and earnestly. Sankara turned an eye of pity on the suffering worlds ; Durga, the Mother of Mercy, joined her prayers to them ; and the Lord of Good quaffed the terrible poison as if it were the sweetest ambrosia. It made His throat black and gave Him another of His names—Neelakantha. They churned again, friends and foes, until Surabhi, the Cow of Plenty, rose to view ; and the Vedic Rishis took it to themselves to enable them to perform yagas and yagnas. Uchhaisravas, the marvellous horse, came next. King Bali wanted it for himself. Indra bore in mind the warning of Vishnu, and desired it not. Next came up Airavatha and the other elephants that support the earth in the eight quarters. Next floated up the gem Kausthubha, and the Lord Vishnu placed it on His lovely breast. Next came up the tree Parijatha and the lovely Apsarasas. (After them came up the moon, whom Sankara wore on His head.—V. P. I. 9).

Next rose a resplendent lotus, bearing on it Maha-lakshmi, the Great Mother, who irradiated the worlds with her effulgence. All bowed themselves in reverence unto her. But, cast her eyes wherever she would, she could not find one who might take his place by her side. One was a

great ascetic, but his anger mastered him. One was a profound philosopher, but the pleasures of the earth were too strong for him to renounce. One was a mighty intellect, but was the slave of women. Verily, he who is not master of himself cannot claim to be master of all ; and who but the Lord of all could take his place by Lakshmi ? One was mightily wedded to his ideal of duty ; but, in the right discharge of it, gentle mercy was a stranger to his heart. One was known far and wide for his countless rites and sacrifices, but egotism and selfishness led him all the way. The possession of power and place was rarely found united with length of years. One was a master of himself and of love and hate ; but his heart was not inclined to take a life mate. One was blessed with phenomenal length of life, but lacked a clean record and spotless character. And even when there was found one who combined in himself all desirable qualities, he suited not Lakshmi in his Karmic affinities. Even if there was one with whom she was thoroughly satisfied, he desired her not. Hence, she took into consideration the above and chose the Lord Vishnu as her consort; and He gave her a place on His broad breast. Her benign looks fell upon the Devas; and wealth, prosperity and every conceivable blessing went along with them. The Asuras came not within the range of her mercy and they became strangers to modesty, valour, might, and other estimable qualities, while greed reigned supreme among them.

Next, Varuni, a damsel of exquisite loveliness, rose from the troubled waters ; and her did the Suras take unto themselves joyfully and with pleased hearts.

And at last rose up Dhanvantari, in whom was manifested one of the centres of the Lord's energy ; and in his hand he held the vessel containing the much-longed-for Waters of Immortality. The Asuras caught sight of it and spurred thereto by their insatiable greed, they wrenched it

from his hands. But, harmony and union was remarkably absent even among themselves. So, they were at each other's throats in no time. Each claimed to be first and denied the right of others to be before him. The weaker among them found that they had no chance with their stronger brethren and cried out "The Devas too have toiled along with us side by side and verily they are entitled to half of the precious waters". In the midst of this bustle and inconceivable uproar, the Lord Vishnu appeared among them as the most marvellously beautiful woman that ever blessed the sight of mortal men or immortal gods. The Asuras forgot their dissensions, the world, and their selves and gazed with staring eyes and gaping mouths at that dream of loveliness. Very soon they were at her feet before they knew it, all crying out "Be our queen and reign over us; distribute among us this hard-earned Elixir of Life. We are content to abide by your decision". But, she clapped her hands in pleased surprise and exclaimed "A nice trick this is to entrap an unwary young girl like myself. But you cannot think me so foolish as to believe that you will entrust this precious ambrosia to a young stip of a girl like myself to distribute as she thinks best among such mighty men as I find before me. But, since it will be an insult to your dignity and honour to suspect your sincerity and truthfulness, I will make as fair a division among you as a simple girl can. But I insist that you must accept my methods and decisions as just and valid, though you might think otherwise. Not a murmur, not the slightest suspicion of complaint or dissatisfaction. Are you agreed?" But the infatuated Asuras heeded not what she said, but kept up a never-ceasing cry unto her. "We care not what you do with us ; reign over us and give this Amritha to whom you like ;" and as if to confirm their sincerity, they placed the

precious vessel in her hands. She made the Asuras and the Devas take their seats in two long lines and began distributing the Amritha to the Devas. By the time she left them there was nothing of the precious Elixir for the Asuras to claim. Rahu, an Asura, was cunning enough to foresee the result and placed himself among the Devas. The Sun and the Moon pointed him out to the Fair Illusion, who instantly sliced off his head with the handle of her spoon. But, he had already partook of the Amritha and his head could not die. So Brahma transformed it into a Chaya-graha (node). From that day he ever chases the sun and the moon and swallows them during the eclipses. Then the Lord Vishnu withdrew his illusory form and left the place on his Garuda. The Asuras were wild with fury at being thus deceived by that chit of a girl and fell upon the Devas, routing them in dire confusion. The Lord Vishnu was back among them quicker than thought ; he extended his protection to the Devas and put the Asuras to flight.

This took place in the sixth or Chakshusha Manavathara of this Kalpa. The Lord was born as Ajitha, the son of Vairaja and Deva-sambhothi ; and this was his Koormavathara.—*Bh. VIII. 5—12.*

Alakshmi, the goddess of adversity and misfortune, arose first. Of coal-black features, fiery eyes, and hair of blazing red, she appeared among them with decrepit limbs. “Gods! What would you of me?” cried she in harsh croaking tones. “Be pleased” requested they “to make your abode in those that speak harsh, in mischief makers and in those who sit down to their meals with unwashed feet ; in those who clean their teeth with sand, charcoal or salt, in those that reverence not the gods, the elders and the guests and in those that are mindless of the social and religious duties of charity, self-sacrifice and the study of the Holy Books ; in

gamblers, adulterers, swindlers and in those that rob the Brahmana, the woman, the infant, the old man and the ascetic ; in refuse heaps where lie skulls, hair, ashes, bones, charcoal, husks and other rubbish. Sin and poverty shall grow in power wherever you are." The Lord Vishnu gave her in charge to Rishi Uddalaka—*Padmapurana, Brahma-khanda IX 10.*

Some puranas omit many of the above incidents. The Siva, Linga and Koorma puranas make but a brief mention of it. The Matsyapurana, the Harivamsa, the Ramayana, and the Mahabharatha omit the curse of Durvasa. The Harivamsa has it that the Daithyas hit upon this expedient to free themselves from death. Sukra, their guru, brought back to life such of his followers as were killed by the Devas, through the efficacy of the magical herb Sanjeevini. The Devas came to know of it and desired to obtain the Amritha. The commentator on the Harivamsa interprets the churning of the ocean to symbolise thapas and the Amritha itself as Liberation.

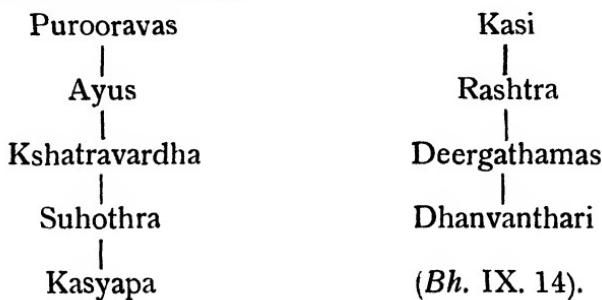
Fourteen are the objects said to have sprung up at that time. The Ramayana mentions nine, the Bharatha nine, the Padmapurana nine, the Bhagavatha ten, the Vayupurana twelve, and the Mathsya fourteen. The poison Kalakoota, the horse, the girl Varuni, the gem, the moon, the Cow of Plenty, the Parijatha, the elephant, the Apsarasas, Dhanvantari and Lakshmi are mentioned in all ; but the Mathsya adds the umbrella of Varuna, the ear-rings of Adithi and the white horse of the sun ; the bow of Maha Vishnu and his conch are also mentioned. The Vayupurana adds the holy Thulasi plant. The Padmapurana, Uttharakanda, mentions the poison, Alakshmi, the girl Varuni, the goddess of sleep, the Apsarasas, the Airavatha, Lakshmi and the Thulasi. The Bharatha (Adiparva 17—19) says that Anantha, the Naga, took Mount Mandara to the Ocean of Milk. On being

promised a share of the Amritha, the ocean consented to be churned. The gods next went to the king of tortoises and made him bear the mount on his back. Then Indra hoisted up the huge mass on its broad back with mighty engines and fixed it thereon.

But, the Anusanika-parva (141) relates that Indra aspired to the place of Paramasiva and hurled his Vajra at Him, the flames from which blackened His throat.

135. 11 *Vasuki* :—The son of Kasyapa and Kadru.

136. 24 *Dhanvanthari* :—



The Lord said to him " You are my son. In your second birth you will be endowed with marvellous yogic powers ; your fame will spread through the worlds ; the Brahmanas will offer worship to you during sacrifices ; and in that body you will attain devahood." In the second Dwaparayuga, Saunahothra desired offspring and prayed to Dhanvanthari, who was then known as Aja. He appeared before his devotee and said " What do you want of me ? "

" I would that yourself deign to take birth as my son " replied he. Accordingly Dhanvanthari was born in the line of Raja Kasi and gave out to the world the science of health.—*Vayupurana*. '92.

He is not to be confounded with Dhanvanthari, one of the nine gems of the Court of Vikramadithya and the author of Dhanvanthari-nighantu.

25. *Apsarasas* :—The progeny of Kasyapa and Muni. Menaka, Sahajanya, Ghrithachi, Pramlocha, Viswachi, Poor-

vachitthi and four others are classed as divine (Daivika) ; these are usually sent by Indra to disturb the thapas of the Rishis. Rambha, Thilotthama, Misrakesi, and 31 others are classed as worldly (Laukika). Urvasi belongs to neither, but was brought into existence by the Rishi Narayana. They are also divided into fourteen classes named Ahootha, Sobhayanthi, Vegavathi, etc.

137. 4. *Asuras* :—Varuni or Sura is the name of an intoxicating drink which is prohibited for the Brahmanas ; but it applies not to the gods.—*Thilaka*.

The Soma Juice and Varuni, so often mentioned in the Hindu books, do but symbolise a peculiar yogic practice which enables the Yogi to raise his consciousness to the world of the Gods and consciously function therein.—*Tr.*

(N. B.) Govindaraja is of opinion that this Chapter should have only 32 stanzas instead of 45 ; and that the episodes of the poison Halahala and of the Koormavathara were later additions by interested parties.—*Tr.*

29. This chapter points the moral that it is perfectly useless to try to harm any those that may take refuge in the Lord Vishnu.

138. 4. *Enable*. The wife cannot perform thapas without the permission of her husband.

15. *Kusaplavana*. The former name of Visala—*Thilaka*.

139. 8. *Impure* :—To sleep in the day time begets foul emanations from the body. Dithi was not used to do so ; hence she was overcome by sleep even where she was sitting and gradually her head sank down until it touched her feet. It was tantamount to a Brahmana defiling himself with the touch of a Soodra ; the above parts of the body gave birth to the castes respectively. Or it may be that she fell asleep with her head placed where her feet ought to be. Or she might have slept

with her feet to the east or the south, which is against the injunctions of the Smrithis. Anyhow, she fell from the level of purity required by her vow,—*Thilaka*.

14. *Hacked* :—Other puranas assert that the seven pieces were again cut each into seven ; hence the 49 classes of Maruths.

140. 8. *Informing deities* :—The Vishnupurana names them Avaha, Pravaha, Samvaha, Udvaha, Vivaha, Paravaha and Parivaha. Avaha rules over the clouds, meteors, rain and lightning. The others rule over the spheres of the sun, the moon, the stars, the planets, the seven Rishis and celestial Ganga and the Dhruvaloka respectively.—*Theertha*. But, the Vayupurana, 67, gives it thus. Avaha rules from the earth to the clouds ; Pravaha from the clouds to the sun ; Udvaha from the sun to the moon ; Suvaha from the moon to the stars ; Vivaha from the stars to the planets ; Paravaha from the planets to the regions of the seven sages ; and Parivaha from that to the world of Dhruva.

The Mahabharatha (*Salyaparva* 39) relates that the Rishi Mankanaka was one day bathing in the Sarasvathi, when his heart was disturbed with the beauty of a lovely woman who chanced to pass by. His energy passed into the waters, which he preserved in his water-pot. It divided itself into seven parts, from which sprang the Rishis Vayu-vega, Vayu-bala, Vayuha, Vayu-mandala, Vayujwala Vayu-rethas, and Vayu-chakra ; and from them were born, the 49 Maruths. But, the *Santhiparva* 336, gives a different version. The Vayus range between the earth and the middle world. The gods known as the Sadhyas gave birth to a mighty son named Samana. Udana, was his son and Vyana was the son of Udana. Apama was the son of Vyana and Prana was the son of Apama; but Prana had no son. Avaha, the first Vayu, ranges in the first world and drives before it the clouds born of heat and smoke (it is the same as Prana).

Pravaha, the second Vayu, ranges in the second world, causing chain-lightning to flash from the clouds. Udvaha, the third Vayu, causes the sun and the moon to rise and set (the same as Udana). It absorbs the waters from the four oceans and causes the rainbows in the sky. It fills the clouds with rain and places them under the charge of Parjanya. Samvaha, the fourth Vayu, bears the clouds along when they beat a to rain, scatters them, groups them again, causes thunder and lightning and wafts the vimanas (vehicles) of the devas along the sky ; it occasionally shatters the mountains to pieces. Vivaha, the fifth Vayu, is extremely rapid in its movements, dry and painful ; it absorbs the rains from the clouds ; thunder, meteors and ærolites are caused by it. Parivaha, the sixth Vayu, supports Ganga and the other celestial rivers ; it blows upon the sun and makes the thousand-rayed god appear on earth with only one of them ; it is the source of the Waters of Immorality ; the moon-god waxes every bright fortnight through its influence. Paravaha, the seventh Vayu, withdraws the life-breaths from all beings at the proper time ; the god of Death and Yama, the Dispenser of Justice follow its tracks ; it leads them to liberation who control their senses and mind and meditate on the Supreme Self. It enabled the 10,000 sons of Daksha, the Patriarch, to reach the ends of the quarters of the earth ; it helps the Jeevas to escape from the Wheel of birth and death and cross the ocean of material existence. Such are the offspring of Dithi, ever in motion, never ceasing.

140. 26. The Padmapurana, Bhoomi-khanda, 23, 24, 25, describes the birth of the Maruths differently. Bala, the Daithya, was a son of Dithi ; he met his death at the hands of Indra. The bereaved mother complained of it to her husband Kasyapa, who tore out one of his matted coils of hair and offered it into the sacrificial fire. Vrithra, the Asura, sprang from it and asked "Lord ! What is thy

will?" "Slay Indra" cried Kasyapa "and bring peace to the heart of Dithi". He mastered the vedas and sastras ; he shone with the lustre of unparalleled thapas ; his strength, energy and splendour were something indescribable. Indra watched it carefully and grew mightily afraid. He sent for the Seven Rishis and said, "Throw a bridge of peace between me and this Vrithra." But they found it very difficult to convince the asura of the sincerity of the Devaraja. "I am sure that your Indra will somehow find a way to win my confidence and bring me to my death. I do not lend my ear to any proposal of yours unless Indra swears it solemnly." "What is your reply?" asked the Rishis of Indra. "I swear" spoke Indra "to observe the utmost sincerity in my dealings with Vrithra. May I be beset with the heinous sins of Brahminicide, etc., if I ever prove untrue to him." Vrithra believed him and resided in the capital of Indra for a very long time. But all along, the crafty Indra was keenly watching for an opportunity to slay his foe. One day he called unto him Rambha and said "See if you cannot any how entrap Vrithra. It is so easy for me to make away with him when he is once fallen from his high estate." Rambha acceded to the proposal and disported herself with many other girls in the lovely groves of Nandana. Vrithra chanced to come there with his Danava friends ; and as misfortune would have it, looked at Rambha full primed for conquest and—was lost. She made him drunk and robbed him of his wisdom and lustre. Indra was ready hard by and struck him dead with his Vajra. And the sin of slaying a Brahmana caught him in its terrible grip.

Dithi, oft bereaved, appealed again to Kasyapa, who taught her a rare vow, observing which, she could bring forth a son who would be the death of Indra. But Indra, the cunning, went to her as a holy Brahmana and was permitted to wait upon her. One day she fell asleep without

having washed her feet and with her head to the west Indra took advantage of her consequent impurity to enter into her womb and cut to pieces his future enemy.

The Maruths are twenty one in number (Rig-Veda I. 311). Their mother was Prisni (*Ib.* IV. 23).

32. *Sumathi* :—

Ikshwaku = Alambusa.

Visala	Sahadeva
Hemachandra	Krisaswa
Suchandra	Soṇadattha
Dhoomraswa	Kakuthstha
Srinjaya	Sumathi (V. R. I. 47.)

— ... —		
Ikshwaku	Rambha	Vegavan
Dishta	Khaninethra	Budha
Nabhaga	Karandhama	Thrinabindu
		=
Bhalandana	Aveekshith	<i>Alambusa</i>
Vathsapreethi	Maruttha	Visala
Pramsu	Ḍama	Hemachandra
Pramathi	Rajavardhana	Dhoomraksha
Khanithra	Sudhrithi	Samyama
Chakshusha	Nara	Krisaswa
Vivimsathi	Kevala	Somadattha
		Sumathi (Bh. IX. 2.)

141. 15. This chapter contains the truth that Rama was endowed with power to purify all the worlds.

20. *Gait* :—The elephant and the tiger may be likened to Rama, while the lion and the bull resemble Lakshmana in their gait.

142. 26 *Gauthama* :—He is the author of Rig Veda I., 75—94 ; XI, 31—36 ; and Samaveda, Part I, Prapathaka ii, Dasathi 1, Rik 1 ; I, ii, 9, 5 ; I, iii, 6, 5 ; I, iv, 5, 10 ; I. iv, 6, 6. His father was Raghogana (Rig Veda I. 75). His son Nodhas was the author of Rig Veda I, 58—63, while Vamadeva, another of his sons, was the seer of Rig Veda IX. 4.

143. 7 *Season* :—Sixteen days after they had bathed from their courses.

16. *Pleased* :—But *V. R.* VII. 30 has it that Ahalya believed that it was her husband Gauthama who approached her. She never had the slightest suspicion that it was any other.

144. 23 *Shall see* :—Gauthama but shaped into a curse the stern penance prescribed for a guilty woman. Nowhere is mention made of her being transformed into a stone. *V. R.* VII. 30 simply condemns her to lose her form and beauty. But other puranas emphasise that she was cursed to become a stone and the dust of Rama's feet freed her from it. It may be that it happened in different kalpas.

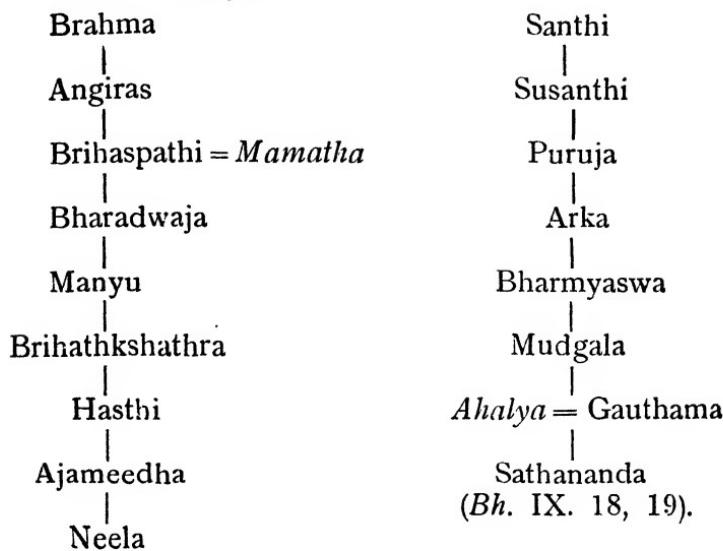
28. *Shake off* :—Adoration of the holy feet of Rama confers greater merit than many thousands of years spent in severe penances.

145. 2 *Take up* :—He gave way to his anger and his curse robbed him of a portion of the merit laid up by him during long years of thapas ; he had to make it up.

9. *Spoil* :—Gauthama wanted to become the Lord of

the devas. And Indra was sent by them to frustrate the attempt of the sage.

146-7. *Ahalya* :—



Once upon a time Brahma concentrated all his energies and set about to gather all that was best and loveliest in creation. He fashioned out of it a woman of marvellous beauty and named her Ahalya, the *faultless*. In time the Regents of the worlds came to know of it and pestered Brahma with petitions for her hand. He was unspeakably bored by the never-ceasing train of suitors and exclaimed "I give Ahalya to him who goes round this Brahmanda thrice and comes to me first." No sooner were the words out of his mouth than they were off like a shot—Indra on his Airavatha, Yama on his ox, Varuna on his crocodile, and Kubera on his human bearer.

Meanwhile Narada, the son of Brahma, was commissioned by his father to seek the Rishi Gauthama in his hermitage. Being suitably entertained by his host, Narada casually mentioned that the charming abode wanted but one thing—an equally charming mistress to serve ever

faithfully its holy master. But, Gauthama laughed a bitter laugh and said "A very fine conceit, doubtless ; my snow-white locks, my shrivelled skin, my over grown hair and beard, I a mere bag of bones rattling together, I am the last person to run any risk of being hunted to death by match-making mammas." Narada cut him off with "What is it to you ? You have but to come with me and the loveliest girl in all the worlds shall be your wife as the reward of unquestioning obedience." Gauthama could not refuse the offer and naturally. They were passing through Indra's capital, when Narada espied the Cow of Plenty lying under the shade of the Wishing Tree (Kalpaka). "Go round the sacred cow thrice" said Narada. "May I know why?" began Gauthama hesitatingly enough ; but Narada cut him short and cried "Enough of your curiosity and questions. Obey me implicitly, blindly and without question or cavil ; and you are sure of the most charming wife one could desire." Gauthama went round the cow thrice and all reverently.

They reached the abode of Brahma and Narada introduced Gauthama to him and said, "Lord ! They tell me that you have with you a marvel of a girl lately created." *Brahma* "Yes ! She was born to plague my life. Day or night, morning or evening, some one is ever at my doors with the eternal petition 'Give me Ahalya.' Indra and Chandra, Kubera and Yama, they are all clean mad about her. I hit upon a nice plan to get rid of their importunities for a time by promising to give the girl to him who comes to me first after circling this Brahmanda thrice. They are now chasing one another in hot speed and know no hunger nor sleep nor fatigue. A little more patience and I will be well rid of this nuisance." *Narada* "Your wishes are to be realised, I believe, sooner than you think. For, here is my friend Gauthama

come to claim the prize as the first in the race instituted. I hope you will not detain him unnecessarily." *Brahma* (*to Gauthama*) "Have you gone round this Brahmanda thrice and have you come out first?" *Gauthama* "You talk strange things. I know nothing of your gods, your races, your prizes. I but followed my friend Narada." *Brahma* (*with well feigned anger*) "How is it, Narada? Will you never have done with your practical jokes?" *Narada* "Gauthama! I wonder at your obtuseness. Tell Brahma what happened to us while we were passing through Swarga." *Gauthama* "Ah! you mean that. Well, we saw the cow Kamadhenu lying placidly under the Kalpaka tree. You asked me to go round it thrice. You told me that it was essential to my getting married. I did so; for, I was to ask no questions. More than this I know not." *Brahma* "Narada! What possible connexion can there be between Kamadhenu and Ahalya?" *Narada* "Lord! You have given it out as an article of faith that in the limbs of the cow are located the fourteen worlds that make up the Brahmanda. Gauthama has gone reverently thrice round Kamadhenu, the most holy and mighty of cows. That is equal in merit to circling the Brahmanda thrice, is it not? I will suggest that he be given Ahalya at once and be treated with all the honors due to a victor in the contest." Brahma saw with his eye of wisdom into the far-past and found that Gauthama and Ahalya had produced much common Karma that had to be worked out in that life. He was much delighted at the diligence of his son Narada, who, as one of the Lords of Karma, had to attend to the proper adjustment of it. He bestowed Ahalya upon Gauthama as his wife. Well pleased beyond all expectations, the sage left for his hermitage on earth and his wife with him, having first taken reverent leave of Brahma and Narada.

Some time after, Indra raced up to the abode of Brahma on his fleet Airavatha and was rushing in, when

Narada who was coming out, stopped him and exclaimed, "Is it Indra ? What a dreadful hurry you are in ! Your body streaming with perspiration, your hair blown all over your face, your dress all soiled and dusty, your ornaments hanging about you in wild confusion, I cannot make you out as my old friend, the Lord of the Devas. Why, you are worn out to a shadow from hunger and your eyes are red with want of sleep." But Indra brushed him aside impatiently and exclaimed " Narada ! Bother me not, now of all times, with your quips and cranks and conceits and compliments. I am in a mighty hurry. I go to Brahma on the most important business. Stand not in my way like a bird of ill omen." Narada caught him firmly and barring his way, said " Let be. You will lose very little by telling me what you are after." Then Indra blurted out " I have come out first of those who have been sent to go thrice round the Brahmanda. I should see Brahma before the others come and must take away Ahalya to my capital. Tell you further later on " and was passing in. But Narada cried after him, " Indra ! What is it you are saying ? Let me hear it again. You go to Brahma to get from him Ahalya to be your wife ? Do you really feel sure that he will give you Ahalya ?" His persistence disconcerted Indra and led him to dimly suspect that there was something unpleasant awaiting him. So, he stopped short and replied " Do you doubt it ? I see here none of those that started with me in the race". *Narada looking at him with the extreme concern* You are the prince of credulous creatures. You are the most innocent and guileless and gullible god that ever breathed in heaven. You are just the sort of fool who will place implicit faith in the words of Brahma and tear around the universe with sleepless eyes and a hungry stomach. Oh, you innocent ! He has fooled every one of you nicely and has bestowed Ahalya upon another. *Indra (beside himself with surprise*

and anger) What ? What is it you say ? Ahalya married !! To whom ! When ! How ! *Narada with the coolest air imaginable*) You consecrated idiot ! Ahalya is married and has by this time most likely a lusty brace of twins. If any one is insane enough to be aimlessly prancing round Brahmandas, how could he hope to be in touch with current affairs? *Indra (with a dazed air)* "And to whom did Brahma dare give Ahalya, having thus deceived me most infamously? *Narada* Gauthama, a Rishi old and pious, is the happy bridegroom. *Indra* Well, how did he in his distant hermitage come to know anything of Ahalya or Brahma or the race ? *Narada* I took the trouble of going all the way and told him of it. *Indra* You went there ? It was *you* that told him of it ? Let be. But he must have come out first of those that went thrice round the Brahmanda? Now, neither I nor the other candidates ever set our eyes upon any one answering in the least to your description. *Narada* No, certainly not. How could it be possible if you were all running round the Brahmanda like born fools and so wasting precious time ? Gauthama at least has the merit of a keener brain. Verily, a Brahmana stands head and shoulders in point of intellect above a blustering sword-blade of a Kshathriya with but an empty skull-pan. Look here. The fourteen worlds are located in the body of the cow ; Gauthama went round the sacred Kamadhenu thrice and made short work of it. He fooled you nicely and won Ahalya. As your friend and well-wisher, I will suggest to you that you will do well to go back to Swarga quickly before your friends come here and laugh you to scorn. *Indra* But, who was it that put up Gauthama to this trick and made him win Ahalya ? *Narada* "Who but I ? You do not seem to realise that I am the party most interested. Shame and sorrow drove poor Indra almost mad and he cried "Narada ! As sure as I am the king of the

'Devas, I will never rest until I have possessed myself of that Ahalya upon whom I have set my heart. There is nothing I would not dare to accomplish my purpose.' And he swore it by a dreadful oath.

2. Gauthama cursed Ahalya to become a river in Janasthana. Rama came that way and happened to cross it, when the curse fell off from her. But this might have happened in some other kalpa—*A. R.* III. 18-22; *Brahma Purana* 87.

3. Indra cawed like a crow near the asrama of Gauthama. The Rishi guessed it was about daybreak and started to go to the Ganga to have his morning bath. But, when he reached it, he saw the goddess sleeping all peacefully. It flashed upon him that somebody had played him a trick; and he hurried back only to see Indra coming out of his cottage as a cat. Forthwith the offender was cursed to be honeycombed all over with eyes and his partner in guilt to become a shapeless stone—*Kamba Ramayana*.

4. Indra lost his heart to Ahalya; he began to frequent the asrama of Gauthama, under the pretence of studying the Vedas with him. The Rishi was one day in deep meditation on the banks of the lake Pushkara, when he became aware of the misconduct of Indra and hurried back to his cottage. The adulterer was even then coming out of it. Forth flashed the curse from the righteous sage. "You shall be covered all over with that which was the cause of your heinous sin." He turned upon Ahalya next "You shall stand here, a mere bag of bones, devoid of flesh, hair or nails. Long ages hence, the Lord will come down on earth as Sree Rama, in the line of Ikshwaku. He will deign to turn his steps here, accompanied by his brother Lakshmana and his wife Seetha. He will come even to where you stand and will appear to be surprised at your strange figure. He will

turn to Vasishtha and exclaim "Holy Sir! What is this?" Then the Rishi will relate unto him the story of your past. Rama will pronounce you innocent and throw the blame on Indra. Then you will regain your natural form and beauty ; and I will take you back unto me, pure and stainless." Indra was ashamed to show himself among his subjects ; so, he hid himself in the waters for long years and prayed to the Devatha Indrakshi to free him from the curse. She appeared to him and said "It is useless to hope that I or any other could interfere with the curse pronounced by the great sage. The best that I can do for you is to throw my illusion over you so that all will see countless eyes over your body in the place of your present deformity."—*Padmapurana, Srishthi-khanda.* 57.

5. Ahalya fell in love with Indra and sacrificed her honour to him. Gauthama knew it through his yogic powers and was there in a moment. Indra was mortally afraid and turned himself into a cat. Gauthama looked at Ahalaya and said "What is that ?" She replied as readily "*Majjara*." Gauthama laughed loud and scornfully. "Just so. You spoke the veriest truth, but when you least wanted to do it. He is of a surety *tvajjara*. Remain for countless ages a senseless block of stone ; the glance of Sree Rama will restore you to your former shape. Your friend Indra will have in abundance all over his body that which he craved for in you. Later on, he will come across the Apsaras Thilotthama, the creation of Visvakarma and they will be changed into as many eyes." (Ahalya wanted to tell her husband that it was but a cat. Now *Marjara* (मार्जर) is the Sanskrit for a cat and in the Prakrit dialect used by women, it is pronounced *Majjara*. (मज्जार). But Gauthama understood it as a Sanskrit word meaning *My lover* (मत् + जार = मज्जार). So he but repeated "He is verily your lover (त्वत् जार एव)."—*Kathasaritsagara, Lambaka* 3.

6. The *Adh. R.*, *Balakanda*, repeats the story of Ahalya being turned into stone and Indra being blessed with what he was after. Ahalya's eyes were opened to the divine nature of Rama and she sang his glory in eloquent phrases.

7. Brahma ordered Visvakarma to fashion Thilotthama the Apsaras, to destroy the asuras Sunda and Upasunda. She reverently went round those that were assembled in the hall of Brahma. Indra was charmed with her beauty and turned whichever way she went and countless eyes sprang over his body in consequence—*M. B. Adiparva* 231.

8. Chirakari, the younger son of the Rishi Medhathithi, of the line of Gauthama, was always slow in his words and acts ; for he thought long and deeply over every step he took. One day Gauthama suspected his wife of infidelity and in his anger ordered Chirakari to slay her. The youth meditated long and deeply over the words of his father who left for the woods. " My father is a god unto me and his word is my law ; but, my mother is no wit the less worth my reverence. It is deadly sin to disobey my father ; but it is equally sinful if I slew my mother. She gave her body to that villain of an Indra, who deceived her by taking the form of my father. Long ago, when the sin of Brahminicide clung to him, he gave a fourth of it to women and also the doubtful boon of sexual desire in all seasons. Hence, my mother is entirely guiltless and Indra is the criminal. The father is declared by the holy books to be the embodiment of all the deities ; but, they declare as emphatically that the mother represents in herself all the deities and all beings. If I reverence my father, I please the gods ; if I reverence my mother, I secure happiness here and hereafter. Verily, it is a nice dilemma I am in." Day after day he thought over it, trying to find a way out of the difficulty. Gauthama came back from

the forest. But his heart knew no peace. "Alas ! I have laid myself open to a terrible crime. The king of the gods came to my humble cottage as a Brahmana. I extended unto him the due rights of hospitality. I prayed him to extend his protection over me. I believed that he would be my best friend and well wisher. But, he betrayed me, in spite of my implicit trust in him. Ahalya is not to blame ; nor Indra who happened to see her while he was coursing along the sky and was seduced by her marvellous beauty. Though a god, yet he is not perfect ; and I should have made ample allowance for a moral weakness, that was, after all, natural in him. A sage of pure heart and restrained passions like myself has no business to sit in judgment over others and give way to anger. But, my guilt is all the more flagrant in that he was my guest. If he failed in his duty, it is no affair of mine. It is between himself and the Lords of Karma. I did wrong in seeking to harm him. Neither Indra nor my wife is to blame. I could have avoided all this mischief, all this unpleasantness, by my yogic powers. It is all due to my carelessness and want of foresight. In mad fury I ordered my wife to be done to death and have burdened myself with the unspeakable sin of slaying a woman. Would that my son Chirakari, who ponders deeply over every step that he takes and never does things in a hurry, transgressed my orders ! He would have saved Ahalya's life ; he would have saved me from a horrible crime ; he would have saved me from wasting my hard-earned thapas in an unworthy curse. All is well if he but justifies his name Chirakari (he who acts with due deliberation.") So praying, he entered his hermitage with a sinking heart and was surprised and no less pleased to find Chirakari and his wife coming forward to pay him reverence. He clasped his son and saviour to his heart and cried " You have, by your calm wisdom, saved me,

my dharma and your mother from ruin. You are the best of sons, the worthiest. How shall I pay you back this deep debt of gratitude ? May you ever continue to deserve your name. May you continue to deliberate long and deeply before each step you take." Thereafter he was never away from his wife and noble son.—*Ib, Santhi-parva.* 272.

9. Gauthama's curse turned the beard of Indra yellow.
—*Ib.* 352.

10. Uthanka, the disciple of Gauthama, finished his studies and requested leave to be allowed to go home to his people. "What would my master have me give him as fees (dakshina)?" asked Uthanka in all humility. "You have already paid it." replied Gauthama "The most ample fees do but please the heart of the teacher. And you have done that in no small measure. If you were a boy of sixteen, nothing would give me greater pleasure than to give you my daughter unto wife; for, full well I know that there is no other that could serve you so well and faithfully." No sooner were the words out of his master's mouth than Uthanka transformed himself by his yogic powers into a charming youth of sixteen ; and was rewarded with the hand of his master's fair daughter. Next, he waited upon Ahalya, his teacher's wife and said "I will consider myself as most blessed if you will only order me to do anything for you, be it to get for you *anything* that this wide universe may contain. I can assure you that it is quite possible to me, who have laid up no inconsiderable store of yogic might, thanks to my revered teacher." Ahalya declared herself amply pleased with his devotion and service to them during his stay there and gave him permission to go ; but Uthanka would not rest until he had worried her into asking something of him. "Then" said Ahalya "bring me the marvellous ear-rings worn by the wife of Saudasa, the king." And Uthanka set forth upon his quest.

Gauthama missed him that day and asked Ahalya what had become of him. She informed him of his importunate request and the object of his journey. "Alas!" exclaimed Gauthama, "the noble king is now under the dreadful curse of Vasishtha and feeds upon human flesh; our poor Uthanka will not escape with his life." "Nay," said Ahalya "may your grace and might keep away from him every thing harmful or unpleasant."

Uthanka went to Saudasa and requested of him the ear-rings of his wife. The king sent the young man to his palace with a password to his wife. That model of chastity gave them to him at once and said "Do not place these on the ground; the Nagas will make away with it. Allow no one to wear this who is impure having dined; the Yakshas will spirit it away. Day and night these will give untold wealth to the wearer. The moon and the stars will lose lustre at nights by contrast; hunger nor thirst, fire nor poison, steel nor beasts can do him any harm who wears these." Uthanka brought them back with all care, but on the way the Nagas caught hold of a tiny slip on his part and robbed him of the precious ear-rings. But, his yogic might compelled the sympathy and assistance of Agni, Indra and the other gods, and he recovered them from the world of the Nagas and kept his word to the wife for his teacher.—*Ib. Aswamedha-parva* 56, 57, 58.

11. The Rishi Devasarma had for wife a woman named Ruchi, who was the most beautiful being in the three worlds. Indra was ever on the lookout for a chance to win her to his arms. But Devasarma, who was not ignorant of the ways of woman, protected her from harm through his yogic powers. Once he resolved to celebrate a sacrifice and had to be away from home in consequence. He thought long and deeply over how to keep her from harm when he was not by. He called

to him Vipula, his favourite disciple and said " May be the wily and unprincipled Indra will come here when I am away and assume the most inconceivable forms to deceive you. But, I am sure you will easily detect him and use your no small yogic powers to keep away danger and dishonour from your master's door."

When he was away, Vipula thought deeply over it and leaving his physical body carefully concealed, he pervaded the frame of Ruchi in his subtle body. Indra did not keep him long waiting. He was gadding about in the most entrancing form he could assume. Ruchi caught sight of him and her heart leapt forward to welcome him as warmly as she could. But Vipula effectively controlled her will and limbs and made her motionless. Then Indra addressed her in his choicest terms of praise and compliment. "Fairest of the fair! Know me as the Lord of the Devas. Your beauty has drawn me down from the world of the gods and has made its bright joys and delights dull and dark to me. Save me from the fiery shafts of Cupid, who respects neither age nor state, nor strength nor weakness." Ruchi was all afire to answer him in phrases equally redolent with the love that was surging in her heart. But Vipula was aware of it and controlled her speech. Ruchi and Indra were equally mystified. The Devaraja had not bargained to find a cold passionless woman, who froze him with her chaste airs and spoke to him not. His heart was weighed with shame ; but he would not give up the struggle without a last attempt. " My love !" said he in his most bewitching manner " We are wasting the precious minutes that ought to have been used to better purpose. Let us take our fill of love and its delirious delights before your ill-mated husband comes back." Ruchi made superhuman efforts to break the spell that bound her and to speak to her heavenly visitor words winged

with burning love ; but, from her lips there came out strange words in stranger tones. "Who are you, bold and bad man ! What have you in common with such as dwell in these calm solitudes ? How dare you come here when the master of this house is away ? I would demean myself by speaking to you in his absence ; more so when I see you raving mad with unholy and obscene words on your lips. Get away from here, lest worse should befall you." The words were clear-cut, perfect in intonation, and grammar and in the purest Sanskrit ; Ruchi ought to have spoken Prakritha at best. She was bewildered. "Strange are my acts and stranger still my words—the very opposite of what I would have them to be." Indra puzzled over it for a long time, until he chanced to look at it with his inner vision. Lo ! there was Vipula pervading the body of Ruchi and dazzling in his spiritual lustre. "I am lost !" cried he "the Rishi's curse once more !!!"

Meanwhile Vipula entered his own body and said to the awe-struck Indra in withering scorn "Unworthy king of gods ! Sinful wretch ! Slave of your lust ! Gods and men will count you no better than a feather, a blade of grass. You have been in too much hurry to forget the dreadful curse that Gauthama launched at you. Was it not enough that your body was most repulsive and loathsome to look at, covered as it was with the breeders of everything impure and unholy. The Rishi's kind pity was, I see, wasted upon you when he threw an illusion over your foul body that made it appear as if covered with countless eyes. You are a sink of iniquity ; you are a hopeless idiot ; your heart is as unsteady as the breath of fame. I am here to guard this woman from every danger. I wonder very much what has made me so forbearing and merciful to-day, especially when I have the very best of reasons to reduce you to atoms. Hasten to put worlds

between you and this place, for, you cannot come across my master and live. Repose not in fancied security ; pride not upon your kingship over gods or upon the Waters of Immortality that you have quaffed. The righteous wrath of a Brahmana is something before which the very Easwaras tremble in dismay. May you be the wiser for what you went through to-day." Indra waited not for further advice but vanished into the depths of space, joyfully exclaiming " My ancestors of happy memory ought to have been peculiarly holy and good ; nothing else would have saved me to-day from utter annihilation."—*M. B. Anusasani-ka-parva 75-76.*

Ahiyari—A village in Darbhanga District, Bengal, 15 miles from Darbhanga and one mile from Kamtowl Railway station on the Bengal and North-Western Railway. Religious gatherings are held on the days of Rama Navami. It is called Ahalyasthana, after a daughter of a Raja who married Gautama Muni and died at Ahiyari. About 10,000 persons attend this fair. The village contains five temples with images of Rama and Seetha.

Damraon.—It is about 10 miles from the Buxar station on the East Indian Railway. The temple is said to contain the images of Ram Chandra and Ahalya Bai, a wise and learned woman, who was turned into stone by the curse of her husband Gautama Muni. When Ram Chandra visited the place, she again returned to life and was translated to heaven. Buxar is 411 miles from Calcutta by East Indian Railway.

Kovvoor.—In the Krishna District, Madras Presidency, is a place of pilgrimage on the Madras Railway. Gautama Rishi, when performing penance here, accidentally killed a cow and brought upon himself one of the greatest sins. He prayed to Siva, and at last succeeded in bringing down the river Godavery, which flowed over the spot where the

cow was killed and relieved Gautama of his sin. This place is much frequented by pilgrims in the belief that bathing in the Godaveri at this place cleanses them from all sins. It is 356 miles from Madras—*Travellers' Companion*, 147-14.

Mithila.—On the north-east of Vaisali lay the kingdom of Videha with its capital Mithila. Janakpur in Nepal, north of Madhuvani, is still identified as Mithila, the capital of Janaka, with all its ancient associations. Sitamari ("where Sita was furrowed out") claims the honor of giving birth to Sita, daughter of Janaka (*Ramayana*-III, 4). Sitakunda, 12 miles east of Matihari, is still revered as the tank where Sita bathed on her way to her marriage. Videha, therefore, must have comprised, besides a portion of Nepal, all these places or in other words, the northern part of the old district of Tirhut and the north-western portion of the district of Champaran. The country is still known as Mithila in learned quarters. Its Brahmins are broadly distinguished from those of Bengal and it is still governed by the Mithila School of law, most admirably represented by the Viramitrodaya of Mitra Misra. The people of Videha must have formerly traded a good deal as *Vaidehaka* or resident of Videha, is given by Amara as a synonym of merchant (II. 9. 78).

Tirabhutki, from which Tirhut is derived, literally means "possessing on or along banks" and probably included the country along the Gandak river. At one time, its kings were supreme in this part of India and I understand an era is still extant commemorative of this rise. According to *Trikanda Sesha*, Tirabhukti is a synonym of Videha, (*Bhoomi-varga*). I do not think this is correct, as I have not found in any old work a similar usage and am told by Mithila Brahmins that the southern portions of Tirhut do not come within Videha. It was therefore, probably, within the dominions of the Rajas of

Tirabhukti, which might have led Purushottama to group these together. Nichchavi is rarer than Tirabhukti, but General Cunningham says the kings of Thibet and Ladak trace their descent from the Nichchavis (p. 451). The Newar kings of Nepal also belonged to this tribe. The Nichchavis, therefore, appear to be the Newars, who are still found in Nepal. They must have dwelt further north, probably about Lauria, near which there are extensive ruins.

Sankasya. The late Prof. H. H. Wilson changed it into Kasi in his Vishnu Purana, but we have on this point not only the unanimity of two such diverging books as the Bombay and the Italian editions of the Ramayana, but also of dramas founded upon it (*Mahaveera Charitra I*). In the seventh century Hiouen Thsang visited a place which he calls Seng-kia-she before going to Kanyakubja. This has been identified with the modern Sankesa on the Kali river to the south of Kampilya and north-west of Kanyakubja. This is probably the old Sankasya, as no other place of that name is known. The only objection is its distance from Mithila, but relations between distant places are often found in the Ramayana—the marriage of the king of Ayodhya with the daughter of the king of Kekaya and the derivation of the river Kausiki in eastern India from the son of the king of Kanyakubja. In the *Mahabharata*, so far as I can remember, there is no mention of the place Sankasya. (A king of that name is mentioned in the *Sabha-parva*, 8, 10). According to the tradition, it has been deserted for hundreds of years. During the war of Kurukshetra, it probably formed a part of the kingdom of South Panchala. If my inference is correct, the Kali is the Ikshumati river. That an Ikshumati river was west of Ahichchatra is clear from the *Katha-sarti-sagara*, 28, 120. Cunningham calls it Kalindi, probably on

misinformation, as it is a synonym of the Yamuna, not of any other river. The name Kali, occurs, however, in the Matsya Purana, 22, 20—*Geography of Ancient India*.

Sitamarhi.—Town, municipality and head-quarters of Sitamarhi sub-division, Muzaffarpur District, Bengal, situated on the west bank of the Lakhndai. A large fair is held here in the month of Chitra, on the Ramanavami day. It lasts a fortnight and draws large crowds from distant places. Tradition has it that Sita here sprang to life out of an earthen pot into which Raja Janaka had driven his plough share. There are nine temples, of which five are in the same enclosure as that of Sita, Hanuman, Siva and Dahi.

It is 42 miles from Darbhanga, on the Bairagnia branch of the Bengal and North-Western Railway.—*Travellers' Companion*.

Visvamitra journeyed with Rama and Lakshmana south-east along the banks of the Gogra (Sarayu) and rested there for the night. He instructed the youths in the *vidyas* Bala and Athibala.

They travelled far on the *second* day and reached the confluence of the Ganga and the Sarayu. The Rishis of the Kamasrama entertained them there that night.

They crossed the Ganga on the *third* day and followed a south-western course along its southern bank until they came to Thataka's lair. Rama slew her and the party spent the night there.

On the morning of the *fourth* day, the Rishi imparted unto the princes the mysteries of the divine weapons and their withdrawals. They then journeyed south and reached Siddhasrama where Visvamitra was conducting his Yagna. The Rishi took the initiatory vow that day. The princes protected the Yaga for *six* days. Rama slew Subahu and his companions on the *tenth* day and routed Mareecha.

On the *eleventh* day the sage proposed to the princes the trip to Mithila. They travelled north-east and stayed for the night on the banks of Sona.

On the *twelfth* day they crossed the river and proceeded north-east till they came to the Ganga. They spent that night on its banks.

On the *thirteenth* day they crossed the broad river, and came to Visala, where king Sumathi entertained them.

On the *fourteenth* day they left the town and crossed the great Gandaki, the small and the Bhogamathi and proceeded north-east until they reached Mithila. On the way Rama tarried at the asrama of Gautama and freed Ahalya from her curse. The journey might have extended over 450 miles.

150. 2. *All beings*—He hints that Rama is the Supreme Person,

151. 2. *Empire*.—Mahodaya was his capital.

16. *Valakhilyas*.—The Patriarch was wrapt in meditation. Then he shook himself. The Rishis known as Arunake-thus, and Vatharasanas came into being from his flesh, the Vaikhanasas from his nails and the Valakhilyas from his hairs—*Taittireeya Aranyaka I.23.*

Brahma
|
Krathu—Kriya
|
60,000 Valakhilyas (*Bh. VI. 1*).

They reside in the orb of the sun and feed upon the grains of corn scattered in the fields. They clad themselves in barks and deer skins and are ever engaged in stern thapas. They range the worlds to carry out the decrees of the gods (*M. B. Anusasana-parva 141.*)

This charming description of the asrama of Vasishtha is but to enhance the greatness of Visvamithra, who was entertained even by that mightiest of Rishis.

153. 31. *Maireya*—A kind of intoxicating liquor extracted from the blossoms of the Lythrum Fructicosum with sugar.

156. 31. *Monarch*—“ Kings are a higher order of beings in that they secure their subjects in the undisturbed possession of life, property, dharma and prosperity. None should harm them ; none should vent his anger at them; none should browbeat them ; none should wound them by harsh and unpleasant words ; the gods walk upon earth in the guise of kings” *V.R.* IV. 18. He rules over us and helps all men to discharge aright the duties of their caste and order of life ; besides, he has come with vast troops, it is hopeless to defeat him ; it is a heinous sin to slay him with my yogic powers ; further, he is my guest and his life is all the more sacred. I know no penance for the crime of slaying a Kshathriya and king.

157. 18. *Speak*. As the Cow of Plenty, she should first be prayed to ; else she cannot take upon herself the initiative of accomplishing our desires. “ Think of me as endowed with the might of Brahnavidya (Wisdom of Brahman) and I will realise your wishes for you.”

Ib. 26. *Paplavas*—The *Sakas* are evidently the *Sacae* (Cr. *Sakai*) a Scythian tribe, to whom the modern Cossacks are traced. In the *Vishnupurana* (IV. 3.) they are said to have half-shaven heads. In the *Bharata Udyoga Parva* 50, they are said to have come with the *Kambhoja* prince to fight on the side of the *Kurus*. In the *Drona Parva* (93. 42), they are called crow-colored, depraved, addicted to women and quarrelsome. The *Hunas* are evidently the nomadic tribe of the Huns, who dwelt for some centuries in the plains of Tartary and were a great scourge to the Chinese and Roman possessions. From the *Raghuvamsa* (IV. 67.) they appear to have once occupied the banks of the Upper Indus. (also *Katha-sarit-sagara*, 19, 6111).

The bearded Paplavas were probably the Parthians and the Paradas with long hair, some of the Parapomisadae, who dwelt in the south slopes of the Hindu Kush. They all followed the train of the celebrated Kala (dark) Yavana, evidently a Scythian ruler, when he marched against Mathura just before it was evacuated by Krishna (*Harivamsa*. 6641).

The history of the dark Yavana is a sufficient refutation of the opinion that the Yavanas were Ionians or Greeks, as its latest advocate puts (Kern's *Brihat-samhita*, Preface). In the Maha Bharata we have not only western Yavanas who went with the Kambhoja prince to fight on the side of Suyodhana, but also eastern Yavanas who came to the Rajasooya festival with the chief of Kamarupa (*Sabha-Parva* 31) and southern Yavanas who were subjugated by Saha-deva (*Ib.* 51). Kalidasa applies the term unmistakeably to the ancient Persians (*Raghuvamsa* IV. 60) and Dandi, a few centuries later, very probably to the Arabian navigators (*Dasa-kumara-charitra* VI). Bhava Misra applies the term to the Turkomans. There is no doubt whatever that the term Yavana was never restricted to the Greeks—an opinion, which, so far as I can see, rests on mere surmises and no evidence whatever. In the *Unadi-Sootras* II. 74) the word is derived from *yu* meaning (says Ujjvaladatta) "to mix," in which case it would mean "mixed races." I have already explained that *Mlechcha* was the generic name for all bordering barbarians or aboriginal tribes. The Kiratas, the Pulin-das, and the Sabaras were all *Mlechchas* (*Amara* II. 10). *Yavana* seems to be the generic names for all *Mlechchas* who were advanced in civilisation and from whom our ancestors had no scruples to learn—*Geography of Ancient India*.

158. 31. *Ashes*—Though Kshathriyas, they were not ruling kings; and they sought to take his life. An ordinary penance would cleanse him from the sin.

163-13. The following chapters show how difficult, nay impossible, it is to raise oneself to the status of a Brahmana.

16. *Enmity*.—It made short work of all his thapas. “Any injury done to a highly developed person reacts terribly upon the doer. We should indeed be careful about our attitude towards any Great One who may come, for He, being far in advance of us, is likely to be misunderstood—to be different from what we have expected and therefore not to be appreciated. One reason why the Great Ones do not more often come amongst men is that the karma of misjudging and ill-using them is dreadful and the fools among mankind are sure to incur it. Truly, it may be said of them in the words attributed to the Christ, that ” before he had offended one of these little ones it had been better for him that a millstone had been hanged around his neck, and he had been drowned in the depths of the sea “—*From an unknown Teacher*.

Wife.—This makes it plain that he was a householder and as such, qualified to act as priest to Thrisanku in his sacrifice.

29. *Brahma*.—The presiding deity of the Wisdom of Brahman, that opens the gate to the rank of a Brahmarsi.

164. 27. *Desist*.—Besides, he was stained with three heinous sins that gave him his name *Tri-sanku*.

166. 32. *Chandala*.—Merit decides for the Brahmana, the Kshathriya and the Vaisya the caste he is entitled to. Failure to discharge the duties pertaining thereto, brings on degradation. Now, Thrisanku swerved from his dharma and sank to the level of a Chandala, in form, mind and spirit.

168. 12. *Sacrifices*.—“I am entitled to go to heaven in this body of mine, at least as a reward for having performed a hundred sacrifices. But, a single untruth destroys for ever all the accumulated merit thereof. I know it and I know that my lips have never been stained with a lie.

28. *Fate*.—Many hold that the Lord controls and directs the acts of his creatures, and that we have no power to take an independent course of action ; they quote in support the vedic text "Not a leaf falls to the ground, not a blade of grass moves except in obedience to His will". Others maintain that the Lord, while controlling in the main our thoughts, words and deeds, gives us a qualified independence in the minor concerns of life. But, it is mischievous in the extreme to hold that the Lord impels a man to do good and guides his hand in doing evil. If he were to busy himself with each one of us and say " Learn this ; turn your hand to such a trade ; marry this woman ; live with her thus ; follow this course of diet ; sleep and wake at these hours ; give this away in charity ; practise this line of purification ; make this tour of pilgrimage ; break into that house ; wring that man's neck ; perjure yourself thus etc.," we can not conceive of a more unhappy creature than the so called Lord of All. For, each moment of eternity will find him busy in apportioning to each being what he should do and how.

Again, the results of such activities, would justly fall upon Him, as the impeller thereof ; sin and virtue, joy and sorrow, reward or punishment, would have no place in the lives of any one of us whatever. Then the Holy Scriptures, the Laws, the Codes and the Puranas serve no purpose. You cannot say that they are given to us to guide our feet on the Path of Right and keep them away from the Path of Evil ; for, we are not called upon to choose any way. And it is supremely absurd to say that they were given out by the Omniscient Lord as guides for Himself and that the Rishis were deputed to serve as models for Him to follow. It will be but a hollow mockery when the Books lay down rewards for virtues and dire punishments for vices.

Nor is it safe to assert that, he reserves us indepedence

in the minor concerns of life ; for, the Laws and the Codes have not thought it important enough to lay down where we are given a free hand and where He shuts us out. Verily, it is hard to pick one's road through that labyrinth, without the Ariadne's thread of what to do and what not.

Further, it would be a nice Lord who impels a man to do evil and punish him later on for obeying Him. That would infinitely disgrace the lowest savage on earth. Nor, could we, in any way, account for the infinite varieties of birth, intellect, position, morality, happiness, sorrow and surroundings we see around us, unless we posit the Lord of Perfection as a capricious, whimsical creature, playing ducks and drakes with worlds and egos.

Hence, it is but sane, at least, to hold that man is not creature of necessity and slave of predestination, but has the divine privilege of free-will. He has implanted in his heart the instincts that enable him to choose between right and wrong ; he has the Laws, the Codes and the Scriptures to assist him ; he has the lives and examples of great men to encourage him in moments of doubt and distress. If he cares not to avail himself of these aids, or knowing them, deliberately chooses the path of evil, he is bound to take the consequences and cannot escape them.

The Lord has no concern with it in the least. He neither acts nor impels ; he is but the impartial witness, entirely unaffected by the activities of the egos. It is utterly absurd to say that Fate favours us or frowns upon us. All do but reap what they sowed in former lives ; the Lord interferes with them in no way. The books teach us that each one of us is the architect of our fortune. The following passages go to support the above view :—

1. *Mahabharatha—(Anusasana Parva 9).*

Rishi Vasishtha asked his father Brahma “ Which is

stronger, Free-will or Fate ? " And to him answered Brahma, " Seed, sprout, leaf, twig, branch, flower, fruit and seed come forth from one another in regular succession. Again the seed goes round the circle of transformation. Nothing is possible of manifestation without the seed ; but for the seed there is no fruit ; the future seed is latent in the present one. The husbandman selects a plot of land and sows the seeds ; and as he sows so he reaps. Even so, man reaps the harvest of the seeds of good and evil sown in the past. A good seed goes to waste if sown on a barren ground ; so, Destiny (past karma) is powerless unless supported by individual efforts (present karma). Seed and soil unite to bring forth the plant. No one can escape or be cheated out of what is due to him in the past. All our acts done or to do are possible of direct observation in life. Good deeds bring about peace and happiness ; evil deeds are productive of misery and distress. The man of action is favoured by fortune and is blessed with never-varying success. "Heaven helps those who help themselves." The man of inaction is hurled from his position and is consumed with grief and sorrow even as if his wounds were washed with the salt water of the seas. Beauty of form and riches are easily obtained by religious austerities. There is nothing that resolute efforts cannot compass. Fortune frowns upon the idler and the laggard. Wealth, love, nay, abode in the high heavens, are but the fruit of our persevering efforts down here. The Shining Ones, the great Dragons of Wisdom, the Yakshas, the sun and the moon, the god of air and the Rulers of the bright constellations were all men in some far past who had raised themselves to godhood solely by their increasing efforts. Affluence, friends, high birth, spiritual effulgence and worldly power turn away from him whose heart is not set upon action.

The Brahmana prospers by his utter purity, the

Kshathriya by his courage and prowess, the Vaisya by his perseverance and the Sudra by ungrudging service to all, The miser, the coward, the idler, the faint-hearted and the slave of his passions come to no good either here or hereafter. The Lord Vishnu, from whom the worlds came into being, is ever engaged in profound meditation in the depths of the ocean for the welfare of the universe. If our acts were to be barren of fruit, the world would ever depend on Destiny (past karma) and cease from any effort ; and that is the sure precursor of universal ruin. He who sits idle with his hands folded and waits for Destiny (past karma) to do everything for him, lives in vain, even as a woman wedded to an impotent man. Good and evil are slower to bear fruit in the world of men than in the regions of the gods. Our efforts at present do but follow in the line of Destiny (past karma) ; for, nothing comes to him from Destiny (past karma) unless his efforts meet it half-way. The very gods hold their high seats on uncertain tenure. To him who controls his Destiny (past karma) and makes it subservient to his present endeavours, it cannot but give him what he aspires after. The gods never do anything to assist any one in the world of men ; but they ever place terrible obstacles in their way, afraid of being deprived of their bright abodes by daring aspirants from the world of the mortals. Thus gods and sages are ever at war. Who can deny Destiny (past karma) when we find it to be at the root of most that befalls us ? But, how does it bring about its results ? Happiness in this world and in the next is the unfailing reward of untiring efforts. We are our greatest friends ; we are our most relentless enemies ; we are the watchful witness of our omissions and commissions. If obstacles thwart our efforts, it but follows that more energetic endeavours are necessary. Good and evil, virtue and vice have no part in the life of the man of inaction.

The mansions of the blessed are attained by righteousness ; there is nothing that meritorious acts cannot compass. Destiny (past karma) is powerless to do anything for him who has laid by no store of merit. King Yayathi of old fell from his bright seat in the heavens ; but, his grandsons recovered it for him through their godly lives. Purooravas, otherwise called Aila, was raised to the worlds of the gods by the might of the Brahmanas. Saudasa, king of the Kosalas, who had performed countless horse-sacrifices, was condemned to lead the dark life of a Rakshasa through the curse of Vasishtha. Asvatthaman and Parasurama, sons of mighty Rishis and unequalled bowmen, never reached the abodes of the gods through their meritorious acts. Vasu, who rivalled Indra in merits and splendour, celebrated numerous sacrifices, but was hurled headlong to the nether worlds and all for a single untruth he had uttered. Bali, the son of Virochana, was bound fast in the toils of promise and righteousness and gladly obeyed the commands of Vishnu to go down to Pathala. On the other hand, Destiny (past karma) was powerless to prevent Janamejaya, who was seated in the bright chariot of Indra, from slaying the Brahmana women. We can hold no other person responsible for our acts, good or bad, but ourselves ; it is unfair and atrocious to throw it upon Destiny (past karma). Why could it not, if all powerful, prevent the Rishi Vaisampayana from being caught in the grip of infanticide and Brahmanicide, though all unwitting ? Nriga, the Rajarshi, was turned into a huge lizard, and all because he happened to make a slight mistake in giving away kine to the Brahmanas during the sacrifice. Dundhumara, the Rajarshi, grew old with the incessant performance of sacrifices ; the gods loved him very much in consequence and conferred upon him excellent boons ; but, he was indolent and listless ; and his boons

were of no account with him. The Pandavas recovered their kingdom from the hands of the mighty sons of Dhritharashtra, all by sheer valor and perseverance. Rishis of stern vows and unshaken austerities launch dreadful curses at the guilty ; Destiny has no hand in it ; it is purely out of the terrible power acquired by them through ages of unflinching effort. All the good things of this world and the next may lie within the grasp of the idler and the ignorant ; but, he never gets at them ; nor does vaunted Fate assist him therein. A slight spark blazes out into a big fire, fanned by the steady wind ; even so, Destiny allied to effort, proves omnipotent. The flame of the lamp grows dim as the oil sinks low ; even so, Destiny is powerless if effort is slack. The man of no efforts may come across vast treasures, beautiful women and every desirable comfort ; but, he is powerless to enjoy them. It is but the persevering leaders of men who wrest their coveted treasures from the grasp even of the mighty gods. He, whom no obstacles dismay, is courted by the Goddess of wealth, though he gives away her gifts with both hands to the poor and the needy. The abode of the gods is not more excellent than the world of men. We see the abodes of mortals overflowing with wealth and prosperity ; on the other hand, the supine Devas live in gloomy mansions that resemble more the burning grounds down here in emptiness. In short, this vast creation contains none who was ever blessed with success and happiness except by his own determined efforts. Fate does not interfere when one walks in the path of evil ; for, it is in no way independent. It but follows in the wake of a man's meritorious acts, even as a devoted disciple follows in the footsteps of his guru. Unflagging, steady effort rules this universe. In truth, effort is alone and always fruitful ; effort sets aside Destiny ; but, effort and Fate combined can raise us to the highest worlds.

A very revered Teacher says "When one unacquainted with the noble doctrine of karma looks around him, and observes the inequalities of birth and fortune, of intellect and capacities ; when one sees honor paid to fools and profligates, on whom Fortune has heaped her favours by mere privilege of birth, and their nearest neighbour, with all his intellect and noble virtues—far more deserving in every way—perishing of want and for lack of sympathy ; when one sees all this and has to turn away, helpless to relieve the undeserved suffering, one's ears ringing and heart aching with cries of pain around him—the blessed knowledge of karma alone prevents him from cursing life and men as well as their supposed Creator.

Of all the terrible blasphemies and what are virtually accusations thrown at their God by the Monotheists, none is greater or more unpardonable than that almost always false humility which makes the presumably pious Christian assert, in the face of every evil and undeserved blow, that "Such is the will of God."

Dolts and hypocrites ! Blasphemers and impious Pharisees who speak in the same breath of the endless merciful love and care of their God and Creator for helpless man, and of that God scourging the good, *the very best of his creatures, bleeding them to death like an insatiable Moloch* ! Shall we be answered to this, in Congreve's words,

But who shall dare to tax Eternal Justice ?

Logic and simple common sense, we answer. If we are asked to believe in "Original sin," in *one* life *only* on this earth for every soul and in an anthropomorphic Deity, who seems to have created some men only for the pleasure of condemning them to eternal hell-fire—and this whether they be good or bad, says the Predestinarian—why should not every one of us who is endowed with reasoning powers, condemn in his turn such a villainous Deity? Life would become

unbearable, if one had to believe in the God created by man's unclean fancy. Luckily, he exists only in human dogmas, and in the unhealthy imagination of some poets, who believe they have solved the problem by addressing him as,

Thou great mysterious power, who hast *involved*
 The pride of human wisdom, to *confound*
 The *daring scrutiny* and prove *the faith*
 Of thy *presuming* creatures!

Truly a robust "faith" is required to believe that it is "presumption" to question the justice of one, who creates helpless little man but to "perplex" him, and to test a "faith" with which that "power," moreover, may have forgotten, if not neglected, to endow him, as happens sometimes.

Compare this blind faith with the philosophical belief, based on every reasonable evidence and on life-experience, in Karma-Nemesis, or the Law of Retribution. This Law—whether conscious or unconscious—predestines nothing, and no one. It exists from and in Eternity, truly, for it is Eternity itself ; and as such, since no act can be coequal with Eternity, it cannot be said to act, for it is Action itself. It is not the *wave* which drowns a man, but the *personal* action of the wretch who goes deliberately and places himself under the *impersonal* action of the laws that govern the *ocean's* motion. Karma creates nothing, nor does it design. It is man who plans and creates causes, and Karmic Law adjusts the effects, which adjustment is not an act, but universal harmony, tending ever to resume its original position like a bough, which, bent down too forcibly, rebounds with corresponding vigour. If it happens to dislocate the arm that tried to bend it out of its natural position, shall we say that it is the bough which broke our arm, or that our own folly has brought us to grief ? Karma has never sought to destroy intellectual and individual liberty, like the God invented

by the Monotheists. It has not evolved its decrees in darkness purposely to perplex man ; nor shall it punish him who dares to scrutinize its mysteries. On the contrary, he who through study and meditation unveils its intricate paths, and throws light on those dark ways, in the windings of which so many men perish owing to their ignorance of the labyrinth of life—is working for the good of his fellowmen. Karma is an 'Absolute and Eternal Law in the world of Manifestation ; and as there can only be one Absolute, as one eternal ever-present cause, believers in Karma cannot be regarded as Atheists or Materialists—still less as Fatalists, for Karma is one with the unknowable, of which it is an aspect, in its effects in the phenomenal world.—*Secret Doctrine* by H. P. Blavatsky, Vol II., pp. 317, 318 and 319.

The following extract represents the latest and the most clearly reasoned-out view of the question :—

We have now to consider how this Will, the hidden Power which has ever moved to activity though not yet controlling activity, slowly wins to freedom, that is to self-determination. In a moment we shall consider what is meant by this word "freedom."

Essentially and fundamentally free in its origin as the Power of the self, Will has become bound and limited in its attempts to master the matter into which the self had entered. We need not shrink from saying that matter masters the self, not the self matter, and this it does by virtue of the self regarding matter as himself, identifying himself with it ; as he wills through it, thinks through it, acts through it, it becomes to him verily himself, and deluded he cries: "I am this !" and while it limits him and binds him, he, feeling it to be himself, cries: " I am free." Yet is this mastering of the self by matter but a temporary thing, for the matter is ever changing, coming and going,

impermanent, and is ever being shaped and unconsciously drawn round and rejected by the unfolding forces of the self, permanent amid the impermanent.

Let us come to the stage in human evolution in which memory has grown stronger than the instinctive out-going to the pleasant and withdrawing from the painful ; in which Intelligence rules Desire, and reason has triumphed over impulse. The result of the age-long evolution is to be reaped, and part of that result is freedom.

While the Will is expressing itself as Desire, determined in its direction by outside attractions, it is obviously not free, but very distinctly bound. Just as any living creature might be dragged by a force greater than its own force in a direction unchosen by it, so is the Will dragged away by the attraction of objects, pulled along the path which promises pleasure, which is agreeable to pursue ; it is not active as a Self-determined force, but, on the contrary, the Self is being dragged away by an external and compelling attraction.

No more vivid picture of the Self, under these conditions, can be given than that before quoted from an ancient Hindu Scripture, in which the Self is limned as the rider in a chariot, and the senses, attracted by pleasure-giving objects, are the ungovernable horses that carry away the chariot of the body and the helpless rider within it. Although the Will be the very Power of Self, so long as the self is being carried away by these unruly horses, he is emphatically bound and not free. It is idle to speak of a free will in a man who is the slave of the objects around him. He is ever in bondage, he can exercise no choice ; for, though we may think of such a one as choosing to follow the path along which attractions draw him, there is, in truth, no choice nor thought of choice. So long as attractions and repulsions determine the path, all talk of freedom is empty

and foolish. Even though a man feels himself as choosing the desirable object, the feeling of freedom is illusory, for he is dragged by the attractiveness of the object and the longing for pleasure in himself. He is as much, or as little, free as the iron is free to move to the magnet. The movement is determined by the strength of the magnet and the nature of the iron answering to its attraction.

To understand what we mean by freedom of the Will, we must clear away a preliminary difficulty which faces us in the word "choice." When we appear to be free to choose, does that so-called freedom of choice mean freedom of Will ? Or is it not true to say that freedom of choice only means that no external force compels us to elect one or another of alternatives? But the important question that lies behind this is : "what makes us choose?" Whether we are free to act when we have chosen is a very different thing from whether we are "free" to choose, or whether the choice is determined by something that lies behind.

How often we hear it said as a proof of the freedom of the Will : "I am free to choose whether I will leave the room or not. I am free to choose whether I will drop this weight or not." But such argument is beside the question. No one denies the power of a person, physically unconstrained, to leave a room or to stay in it, to drop a weight or to uphold it. The interesting question is : "Why do I choose?" When we analyse the choice, we see that it is determined by motive, and the determinist argues : "Your muscles can uphold or drop the weight, but if there is a valuable and fragile article underneath, you will not choose to drop it. That which determines your choice not to drop it is the presence of that fragile object. Your choice is determined by motives, and the strongest motive directs it." The question is not : "Am I free to act?", but : "Am I free to will?" And we see clearly that the will is determined by the

strongest motive, and that, so far as that goes, the determinist is right.

In truth, this fact that the will is determined by the strongest motive is the basis of all organised society, of all law, of all penalty, of all responsibility, of all education. The man whose will is not thus determined is irresponsible, insane. He is a creature who cannot be appealed to, cannot be reasoned with, cannot be relied on, a person without reason, logic, or memory, without the attributes we regard as human. In law, a man is regarded as irresponsible when no motive sways him, when no ordinary reasons affect him ; he is insane, and is not amenable to legal penalties. A will which is an energy pointing in any direction, pushing to action without motive, without reason, without sense, might perhaps be called "free," but this is not what is meant by "freedom of the will." That will is determined by the strongest motive must be taken for granted in any sane discussion of the freedom of the will.

What then is meant by the freedom of the Will ? It can be but a conditioned, a relative freedom at most, for the separated Self is a part of a whole, and the whole must be greater than, must compel, all its parts. And this is true alike of the Self and of the bodies in which he is ensheathed. None questions that the bodies are in a realm of law, and move within law, can move but by law, and the freedom with which they move is but in relation to each other, and by virtue of the interplay of the countless forces which balance each other variously and endlessly, and in this variety and endlessness offer innumerable possibilities and thus a freedom of movement within a rigidity of bondage. And the Self also is in a realm of law, nay, is himself the very law, as being part of that nature which is the Being of all beings. No separated Self may escape from the Self which is all, and however freely he may move with regard to ~~other~~

separated Selves, he may not, cannot move outside the life which informs him, which is his nature and his law, in which he lives and moves. The parts constrain not the parts, the separated Selves constrain not the separated Selves ; but the whole constrains and controls the parts, the Self constrains and controls the Selves. Yet even here, since the Selves are the Self, freedom starts up from amid apparent bondage, and " none else compels ".

This freedom of a part as regards other parts while in bondage to the whole may be seen clearly in physical nature. We are parts of a world whirling through space and revolving also on its own axis turning eastwards ever. Of this we know naught, since its motion carries us with it, and all moves together and at once, and in one direction. Eastwards we turn with our world, and naught we can do will change our direction. Yet with regard to each other and to the places about us, we can move freely and change our relative positions. I may go to the west of a person or a place, though we are both whirling eastwards ceaselessly. And of the motion of a part with regard to a part I shall be conscious, small and slow as it is, while of the vast swift whirling that carries all parts eastwards and onwards ever, I shall be utterly unconscious, and shall say in my ignorance. " Behold, I have moved westwards." And the high Gods might laugh contemptuously at the ignorance of the fragment that speaks of the direction, of its motion were it not that they, being wise, know of the movements within the motion, and of the truth which is false and yet true.

And yet again may we see how the great Will works onwards undeviatingly along the path of evolution, and compels all to travel along that path, and still leaves to each to choose his method of going and the fashion of his unconscious working. For, the carrying out of that Will needs every fashion of working and every method

of going, and takes up and utilises all. A man shapes himself to a noble character, and nourishes lofty aspirations, and seeks ever to do loyal and faithful service to his fellows ; then shall he be brought to birth where great opportunities cry aloud for workers, and the Will shall be wrought out by him in a nation that needs such helping and he shall fill a hero's part. The part is written by the great Author ; the ability to fill it is of the man's own making. Or a man yields to every temptation and becomes apt to evil, and he uses ill such power as he has, and disregards mercy, justice and truth in petty ways and in daily life; then shall he be brought to birth where oppression is needed and cruelty, and ill ways, and the Will shall be wrought out by him also in a nation that is working out the results of an evil past, and he shall be of the weaklings that tyrannise curelly and meanly and shame the nation that bears them. Again is the part written by the great Author, and the ability to fill it is of the man's own making. So work the little Wills within the great Will.

Seeing, then, that the Will is determined by motive, conditioned by the limits of the matter that enveils the separated Self, and by the Self whereof the Self exercising the Will is part—what mean we by the freedom of the Will ? We mean, surely, that freedom is to be determined from within, bondage is to be determined from without ; the Will is free, when the Self, willing to act, draws his motive for that volition from sources that lie within himself, and has not the motive acting upon him from sources outside.

And truly this is freedom, for the greater Self in which he moves is one with him : " I am that " and the vaster self in which moves that greater Self is one with that vaster, and says also : " I am That " ! and so on and on, in huger and huger sweeps, if world-systems and universe-system be thought of ; yet may the lowliest " I " that knows himself

turn inwards and not outwards, and know himself as one with the Inner Self, the Pratyagatma, the One, and therefore truly free. Looking outwards he is ever bound, though the limits of his bondage recede endlessly, unlimitedly; looking inwards he is ever free, for he is Brahman, the Eternal.

When a man is self-determined, then, we may say that the man is free, in every sense in which the word freedom is valuable, and his self-determination is not bondage, in any harassing sense of that word. That which in my innermost self I will to do, that to which none other forces me, that bears the mark which distinguishes between the free and the bound. How far in us, in this sense of the word freedom, can we say that our will is free? For the most part, but few of us can claim this freedom in any more than a small portion. Apart from the previously mentioned bondage to attractions and repulsions, we are bound within the channels made by our past thinkings, by our habits—most of all by our habits of thought—by the qualities and the absence of qualities brought over from past lives, by the strengths and the weaknesses that were born with us, by our education and our surroundings, by the imperious compulsions of our stage in evolution, our physical heredity and our national and racial traditions. Hence only a narrow path is left to us in which our will can run; it strikes itself ever against the past, which appears as walls in the present.

To all intents and purposes the will of us is not free. It is only in process of becoming free, and it will only be free when the self has utterly mastered his vehicles and uses them for his own purposes, when every vehicle is only a vehicle, completely responsive to his every impulse, and not a struggling animal, ill-broken, with desires of its own.

[This is only accomplished when the life of the self in-

forms the matter of his vehicles, instead of the downward-striving elemental essence (*i.e.*) when the law of the spirit of life replaces the law of sin and death].

When the self has transcended ignorance, vanquishing the habits that are the marks of past ignorance, then is the self free, and then will be realised the meaning of the paradox, "in whose service is perfect freedom." For then will it be realised that separation is not, that the separated will is not, that, by virtue of our inherent Divinity, our will is part of the Divine will, and that it is which has given us throughout our long evolution the strength to carry on that evolution, and that the realisation of the unity of will is the realisation of freedom.

Along these lines of thought it is that some have found the ending of the age-long controversy between the "freedom" of the will and determinism, and, while recognising the truth battled for by determinism, have also preserved and justified the inherent feeling ; "I am free, I am not bound." That idea of spontaneous energy, of forthgoing power from the inner recesses of our being, is based on the very essence of consciousness on the "I" which is the self, that self which, because divine, is free.—*A study in consciousness* by Annie Besant, pp. 411—423.

169. 13. A born chandala has a chance of raising himself in the scale of caste evolution ; but, this chapter makes it plain that one, who degraded himself to the level of a chandala, has almost insurmountable difficulties in the way of his being reinstated.

171. 21. *Mushtiks* :—They are now called in India *Dombas* and are of the same race as the *Gypsies* of the west.

30. Q.—Viswamitra was a man of stern self-control and profound knowledge of the world. How was it then that he let loose his wrath upon those who spoke but the

truth that it was against the rules for a kshatriya to conduct a sacrifice for a chandala ?

A.—His enmity with Vasishtha and his ever-consuming desire to injure him in every way clouded his clear intellect and conscience ; anger got the mastery over him, and he cursed away his hard-earned Thapas.

172. 31. *Came not* :—Because rites performed against the rules and by an unqualified person are as good as not gone through.

175. 31. *Trisanku* :—Trayyaruna, of the line of Ikshvaku, bore a son by name Satyavrata. He trod the path of evil, and one day turned upon his father and said, “Get away from here”. But the poor old king asked meekly, “Where shall I go ?” ; and the unnatural son thundered out “Go and rot with the dog-eating chandalas.” The mild king wandered through the dark forests for years out of count. The heinous sin bore ample fruit in that Satyavrata’s kingdom was devastated by famine and pestilence and drought for twelve years. Vasishtha, his guru, lifted not his little finger to relieve him from the misery and obloquy, deeming it a fitting punishment and penance for the sinner. Satyavrata was eventually obliged to leave his kingdom and led a miserable life near the haunts of the dog-eaters. It was then that Visvamitra left his wife and children there and repaired to the sea-shore to perform dread austerities. His wife sold away one of her sons to keep the others alive. Satyavrata came to know of this and gave back the son to the sorrowing mother and maintained them in comfort all through the famine. One day, after fruitless efforts to get meat for them, he chanced to espy a cow browsing near the hermitage of the holy Vasishtha ; faint and confused with hunger and fatigue, he slew it outright and supported himself and Visvamitra’s wife and children. Now, there were three deadly sins to his account—his filial atrocity,

the slaying of his guru's cow and partaking of its meat without due religious rites ; hence, he was ever after named Trisanku (he who has in him the three germs of sin). Visvamitra came back from his thapas ; his joy and gratitude to Trisanku knew no bounds for his having so unselfishly and at such a terrible sacrifice maintained his wife and children. "Ask of me what thou wilt" said he with generous fervour. "Nothing, but that I might be allowed to call your Reverence my guru and priest." Visvamitra thereafter crowned him king and by his mighty thapas raised him to the mansions of the Shining Ones ; whereat, Vasishtha wondered greatly—*Vayupurana* 86, 88.

Trisanku, while a chandala, slew Vasishtha's cow. This added to his haughtiness and to his malignant efforts to do evil unto the sons of Vasishtha, resulted in his being endowed with two horns growing out of his head. When he fell from heaven, the water that flowed from his mouth became the river known as Karmanasa (between Benares and Behar). It is considered sinful for any one to bathe in its waters—*Tulasidas Ramayana*. I.

He was apprehensive that Visvamitra's family would not take meat at his hands ; so he hung deer's meat from the branches of a fig tree that grew near the waters of the Ganga—*Vishnupurana*. IV 3.

Trisanku abducted the princess that was promised in marriage to the king of Vidarbha. Vasishtha counselled his father to banish him from the kingdom ; and he lived with the chandalas thereafter. He had expected that Vasishtha would argue in his favour and urge that there was no illegality in his marrying a woman who had not become another man's wife, as he brought her away before the Sapthapadi or seven-step ceremony had taken place. But Vasishtha remained passive. So, with a grudge against him, he left the capital.—*Brahmapurana, Lingapurana, Harivamsa, Bharata* I. 71.

"Thus, in accounting for the name of Trisanku, this story makes him a goghna, cow-killer, and beef-eater, in order at the same time to account for his having become, chandala. But with all this, he is made to go to heaven without anything being said of his fall. There seems therefore to be a paradox in this story as in all others connected with Vasishtha and Visvamitra. Trisanku's name Satyavrata reveals him as a knower of Brahman (Satyam, Truth, and as one who practised. It as his vrata, cherished object). His Queen Satyaratha, the vehicle of Truth, can only be Vidya or Sraddha, Knowledge or Faith. He rescues her from the grasp of worldliness and marries her himself. The result is that he goes to the forest and roams as a hunter, hunting the passions. Kama, Desire, is of two kinds, one worldly and selfish, the other, godly, that which longs for the state of the Infinite Atman ; and therefore Kamadhenu, the Cow of Desire, has two aspects, one as Avidya, the Aja of three colors, and the other as Vidya. Taking her in the former aspect, she is killed. Taking her in the latter aspect, she is eaten as the only food capable of removing the hunger for selfish desires, of not only Trisanku but also of the family of Visvamitra, the intimate friend of Vasishtha. Thus the three paradoxical sins are the three merits, which added to the merit of a religious Chandala or the drinker of the sacred Soma, enable Trisanku to go to heaven in his swarupa, the soul's real state, as the bodiless Infinite Self. A man who has deserved the favor of the father of the sacred Gayatri will not fall. He will become a Nakshatra permanent.—*Essays on Indo-Aryan Mythology* by Narayan Iyangar Vol. I, pp. 109 and 110.

The Harivamsa, 76, Sloka 51, when describing the autumn, says that Agastya, the Star Canopus, travels in that Asa, direction (*i.e.*) the south which is Trisanku-charita (*i.e.*) in which Trisanku travels. This indicates Trisanku to be a sou-

thern constellation. The late Siddhanti Subrahmanya Sastri of Madras informed me, in January 1888, that Trisanku's loka, world, is a cluster of stars consisting of two big stars and several small ones situated to the south of Anuradha, which itself is in the dakshina-gola or southern half of the celestial globe, and that this cluster is in what is called Visvamitra's swarga. I was not able to gather in what old work this swarga is described ; but as the learned Sastri's description gave me a general idea of the region of the cluster, it remained for me to find out, in or about that region, the *head downward* Trisanku of the Ramayana. An English work on astronomy had made me familiar with the Cross, and having gazed at it over and over, I consider that the swarga or heaven of Visvamitra consists of many of the stars of the constellation Centaurus *plus* the Cross ; that the star Alpha Centauri, by reason of its being the biggest and brightest of the group, is our Rishi Visvamitra, shining brilliantly (*i.e.,*) performing tapas *in the south*, his place *in the north* being in the Great Bear along with Vasishtha and other Rishis ; and that the head-downward Trisanku is the Cross plus two stars which are to the north of it and which according to Proctor's star Atlas, belong to the constellation Centaurus. The reason for taking Trisanku to be the protege of Alpha Centauri (Visvamitra), seems to be the proximity of these two to each other, the brightest star of the group being taken naturally to be the guru or priest. The accompanying plate shows the prominent stars of Trisanku and Visvamitra, marked *a* to *h*. The stars *a* to *f* (of which *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, form the Cross) represent the body of Trisanku and suggest beautifully the idea of a man hanging head-downwards, *a* the lowermost star being his head, *b* and *c* his two sides, *d* his navel, and *e* and *f*, the uppermost stars, his two legs. The star *g* is the Alpha Centauri. If, as I take it to be, it is Visvamitra, the bright star *h* near it may be viewed

as though it is his outstretched hand commanding Trisanku not to fall down, but stop where he was even with his head, the star *a*, downwards (*i. e.*,) towards the south pole. The distance of *a* to the pole is about 27 degrees, and Trisanku, from head *a* to feet *e* and *f*, is a large constellation extending over 15 degrees north to south, from about the 48th to the 63rd degree south of the equator. As these stars *a* to *h* are almost opposite to the Great Bear in the north, they may fitly be called the Great Bear of the south.

As Trisanku is not far from the south pole, he describes a small circle diurnally in the sky while the stars on the equinoctial line describe a larger circle. Hence the saying that Visvamitra ordained other stars to rotate round Trisanku.—*Ib.* pp. 96, 97, and 98.

176. 8. *Pushkara* :—The district of Ajmere contains the holy theertha of Pushkara (*M. B. Vanaparva*. 82) with its most conspicuous temple of Brahma. It is five miles north-west of Ajmere. It has a sacred lake which is however said to be artificial. Its redundant waters are carried away by the rivers Sarasvathi and Luni or Lavana.—*Geography of Ancient India*.

Town, lake and place of pilgrimage in Ajmer-Merwara, Rajputana, about 7 miles in a south-westerly direction from Ajmer. Pushkar is the only town in India which contains a temple dedicated to Brahma, who here performed the sacrifice known as *Yagna*, whereby the lake of Pushkar became so holy, that the greatest sinner by bathing in it earns the delights of paradise. The town contains five principal temples, dedicated respectively to Brahma, Savithri, Badri Narain, Varaha, and Siva Atmaseswara, Bathing ghats line the lake and most of the princely families of Rajputana have houses round the margin. No living thing may be put to death within the limits of the town. Great fair in October and November, attended by about

100,000 pilgrims, who bathe in the sacred lake. Large trade at the time in horses, camels, bullocks etc., etc. Population generally Brahmans. Ajmer is 615 miles from Bombay (Colaba) and 235 miles from Delhi by the Bombay-Baroda and Central India Railway.—*The Traveller's Companion.*

13. *Ambareesha*:—He is the seer of Rig Veda IX.98.

22. There is a long interval between the beginning of the sacrifice and the sending out of the consecrated horse to make the round of the earth.

177. 28. *Sold* :—The Scriptures prohibit the sale or the gift of children ; but, it is allowable as a special case to sell a boy to complete a sacrifice, even as a family is preserved from extinction by the gift and adoption of a boy.

178. 10. *Brother* :—Kausiki or Satyavati, the sister of Viswamitra, was his mother.

180. 25. *Stern tapas* :—He cursed his sons and exhausted the merit of his previous tapas; so, he resolved not to give way to anger.

26. This episode is related in the Bahvricha Brahmana as connected with Harischandra ; it is possible that Ambarisha here spoken of might be the same as he.—*Go.*

King Harischandra, son to Vedhas of Ikshwaku's line, had one hundred wives but no issue. Narada advised him to pray to Varuna for a child, and promised that the boy would be sacrificed to him. Accordingly Varuna granted his prayer, and a son was born to him whom he named Rohitha. Varuna claimed his promise. "The boy is impure" said Harischandra "during the ten days when he is in the place where he was born." Ten days passed away and Varuna claimed his promise. "A child is pure" replied the king "only after teething." There was teething and Varuna claimed his promise. "I pray that you wait till these milk teeth fall away" replied the king. The milk teeth fell off ; and Varuna claimed his promise. "The

child will be pure when its teeth have grown again." Its teeth grew again and Varuna claimed his promise. "A Kshatriya boy is pure only when he can carry his shield and put on his armour." Rohitha was old enough to put on his armour and carry his shield and Varuna claimed his promise. The king asked his son to consent to be sacrificed to Varuna ; but Rohitha refused and taking his bow ran away to the forests and lived there for a year. Varuna punished Harischandra by afflicting him with dropsy. Rohitha came to know of this and tried to come back; but Indra, disguised as an old Brahmana, prevented him and directed him to travel to holy shrines. During the sixth year of his stay in the forests, he came across the Rishi Ajeegartha, son of Suyavasa, a descendant of Angiras. Three sons had he, Sunah-puchha, Sunas-sepha and Suno-langoola. He purchased the second for a hundred cows, as the father would not part with the first son and the mother with the third. Rohitha took the victim to his father, who said to the God "Here is this man whom I am prepared to sacrifice to you". "All right" replied Varuna "a Brahmana is better than a Kshatriya", Then began the Rajasooya sacrifice, at which Visvamitra was the Hotha, Jamadagni the Adhwaryu, Vasishtha the Brahma and Ayasya the Udgatha. But, they found no one who would bind Sunas-sepha to the sacrificial post and slay him. Then his father Ajeegartha volunteered to do it for another two-hundred cows. He bound him and drew his sword when Sunas-sepha said to himself "They will certainly slay me as though I was an animal and not a human being like themselves. I shall pray to the mighty Gods." He called upon Varuna and other Gods and at last upon Ushas in three verses. The first loosened his bonds : the second reduced the king's dropsy ; and the third set the victim free and restored his father to perfect health. Viswamitra adopted Sunas-sepha as his eldest son

had named him Devaratha or God-protected. The Sage and many sons Madhuchhandas, Rishabha, Renu, Ashtaka and others, 50 older than Madhuchhandas and 50 younger. The older sons did not like to give up their birth right in favour of Sunas-sepha, and were cursed by their father to become outcastes. They became Andhras, Pundras, Sabaras, Pulindas, Mushtikas and many other tribes, so that the descendants of Visvamitra turned out the worst of the Dasyus. The 50 younger brothers recognised Sunas-sepha as their elder brother—*Aithareya, Brahmana*; *Bh IX. 7.* [The latter supplements the above thus:—Indra was gratified and presented unto him a golden chariot. Visvamitra, struck with his truthfulness, worth, and patience, imparted unto him Atma-vidya. The king merged his mind into the rudiments of the Earth (Prithivi-thanmathra), the Earth into water, the water into Fire, the Fire into the Air, the Air into the Akasa, the Akasa into the Ahankara, the Ahankara into the Mahat; he meditated upon the last as the Self in its aspect of knowledge and passed beyond the portals of ignorance].

Sunas-sepha is generally supposed to be the seer of the seven sookthas from 24 to 30 of the Mandala I, Rig Veda IX. 3; but from internal evidence it is plain that the author was some other person unknown. Verses I, 24 and 25 are said to be recited by him when he was about to be sacrificed. The name of Sunas-sepha occurs in sooktha 24, which is the first of its group; hence, the whole came to be known as the Sunas-sepha sookthas, which was wrongly understood to mean the hymns of which Sunas-sepha himself is the author. But a perusal of the following verses will, I trust, show that it is otherwise.

“ This is what they told me day and night ; this is what the desire of (my) heart says, viz., may that king Varuna, whom Sunas-sepha invoked when seized, liberate us—(verse 12).

For, Sunas-sepha, when seized and tied at the three places of the wood (the sacrificial post) invoked the Aditya (Varuna); may King Varuna, who is wise and never deceived, liberate him, may he loosen the bonds—(verse 13).

Varuna ! We wish thy anger down by salutations..... O wise king, loosen (the bonds of) sins committed (by) us—(verse 14).

Varuna ! Off from us loosen the upper bond, away the middle, and down the lower. And then O Aditya ! may we sinless be in thy ordinance, and belong to Aditi—(verse 15.)

It seems to me that the poet uses Sunas-sepha as a simile, and prays for being liberated from the triple bonds of sin, just as Sunas-sepha was, from the triple bonds of the post. Another poet, in verse 7 of the second sooktha of the fifth Mandala called the Atreya-mandala, uses the same simile thus:—

“O Agni! you liberated the bound Sunas-sepha from the yoopa (sacrificial post) ; for he prayed with fervour. Even so, Agni! loosen our bonds”.

In order to use the simile of Sunas-sepha in this manner, the poets of the Rig-veda must have had an older legend about him, and it is quite possible that that legend came down to the author of the Aithareya Brahmana, mixed up with the group of the seven sookthas in one of which Sunas-sepha is prominently mentioned and which, being called Sunas-sepha sookthas, gave rise to the idea that he was the seer of them all. Hence, he is tossed about from one god to another in the order in which the Devathas occur in the sookthas themselves, with the consequent anomaly of his going to Agni twice.—*Essays on Indo-Aryan Mythology* by Narayana Iyengar, Part I, pp. 115 and 116.

Vachaspathya explains Harischandra-pura to mean the Saubha-pura or Kha-pura or Gandharva-nagara. It may mean either the aerial cities of the Daityas and Asuras like

the Tripuras or an illusory appearance often observed in the sky which takes the form of a beautiful city with towers, mansions, groves, etc.

Visvamitra officiated at a sacrifice performed by Harischandra. The sacrificial fee due to the Rishi far exceeded the wealth in his treasury; so, he sold him his kingdom, his wife, his son, and himself. The gods were mightily pleased thereat, and took him unto their abodes and his subjects. Narada met him there and easily led him to recount the acts of merit that won for him the bright regions. Immediately was the king hurled head long down to the earth; but his deep remorse stayed him on the way and he and his subjects found a residence between the heaven and the earth. His town is sometimes visible in the sky and is named after him. Vasishtha came to know of the terrible persecutions which his disciple suffered at the hands of his old rival Visvamitra and the two Rishis carried on a long and bitter fight in the form of huge birds. The three worlds were about to be ruined thereby, when Brahma came there and reconciled them by instructing them in the science of Self. It was the very same that Vasishtha imparted long after to Sree Rama when the fit of despondency came upon him—*Markandeya-purana, Padma-purana, Vayu-purana*.

Harischandra was an ardent devotee of Siva; his wife Satyavati was an emanation of Jaya, one of the attendants on Durga, the spouse of Mahadeva.—*Siva-purana*.

181. 8. *Menaka*:—Ghrithachi is often substituted for her (*vide* V. R. IV.).

187. 11. *Stern tapas*:—Clad in cloth made of grass and black deer-skin, Arjuna held his staff and began his stern course of tapas. At first, he ate the withered leaves fallen on the ground from the trees. In the first month he partook of fruits once in three nights; in the second month once in six nights; in the third month once

in a fortnight; in the fourth month he lived upon air; he rested the weight of his body on his toes and stood with nothing to lean upon, his arms upraised over his head; his frequent baths made his hair yellow and streamed from him like flashes of lightning.—*M. B. Vana-parva.* 38.

188. 3 *Everything* :—The status of a Brahmana by birth and all the Samskaras incidental to it. This assured to him and to the three generations descended from him the much-coveted position.

9. *Wandered* :—The episode of Visvamitra teaches us that the greatness and glory of our guru is something unthinkable, in that he confers upon us supreme good ; it is indescribably hard, nay, almost impossible, to uproot the rank weeds of love and hate in us ; the status of a Brahmana is won only after the complete extirpation of the roots of desire and anger, and it is no light task ; deliberate offence to the holy Ones is the direst curse that one could draw down on his head ; and no acts of merit avail to counteract it.

189. 9. *Visvamitra*. He is the seer of Rig-veda III. 1 to 13, 25 to 54 and 57 to 63; IX. 67 ; X. 167. He officiated as Purohitha to king Sudasa and was richly rewarded by him. On his return, he came to the confluence of the two rivers Vipasa and Satadru and made them fordable by reciting Rig-veda III. 38.

Rishi Chyavana, of the line of Bhrigu, saw with the eye of spirit into the distant future that some Brahmanas of his race would follow the dharma of Kshatriyas and resolved to exterminate the clan of Kusika. Accordingly he repaired to the palace of king Kusika and said to him “ I desire to live with you for a while.” “ Holy sir !” replied the king “ I ever await your commands with pleasure.” He paid him the honours of hospitality due to one of his rank and with his wife and retinue, stood humbly before him

with heads bent over folded palms. Said Chyavana " I desire not your kingdom, wealth, women, cattle, provinces or sacrificial materials. I mean to observe a vow and towards that end require you and your wife to wait upon me all through." The royal pair were overjoyed and expressed their sense of the great honour done them. They took Chyavana to a magnificent hall in their palace and said to him, " Lord ! This is at your disposal for ever. I and my wife will do our best to wait on you as long as you would allow it," The sun set while they were talking and Chyavana cried out " Let me have my dinner." At once the king placed before him whatever he wanted. But, Chyavana exclaimed " I wish to sleep"; and the king took him to his splendidly furnished bed-room and said, " Lord ! may it please you to take rest on this bed." " Well" replied the Rishi " None should rouse me until I awake of my own accord. You should see that you press my feet without a moment's respite." " Lord !" replied Kusika " Your commands be on our heads and eyes"; and he and his wife stood there day and night, constantly pressing the feet of Chyavana with hearts full of devotion and love to him. Chyavana slept on like a log for three weeks ; and all the time Kusika and his wife stood there without food, without sleep, oblivious to fatigue or weariness. Then Chyavana suddenly got up and walked out of the hall without noticing any one. The king and his wife were ready to drop with hunger and faintness ; but they readily followed him even as his own shadow. He cast no glance at them, but walked some distance and as suddenly vanished from their sight. Kusika fainted with grief ; his wife consoled him and they sought far and wide for their honor'd guest. With heavy hearts and heavier footsteps, they returned to their palace, only to find Chyavana sleeping peacefully on his bed. They stood speechless with surprise

and joy and waited on him, devotedly pressing his feet as before. But, Chyavana slept on right through another three weeks, and the royal pair served him as joyfully and as devotedly as on the first day. All on a sudden the Rishi got up and cried " Let me have my bath." Kusika brought a wonderful oil boiled and filtered one hundred times ; and they proceeded to anoint him therewith. Chyavana stayed them not ; but continued as indifferent and motionless as ever. Finding that their hearts were full of devotion and was not in the least ruffled by any breath of annoyance or dislike, he rose all on a sudden and entered his bath. At once they ran after him with bathing materials and proceeded to give him a bath, when he vanished from their sight. Yet their minds were serene and full of devotion. Some one informed them that the sage was sitting on the royal throne in the hall of audience, fresh from his bath and magnificently adorned with the crown jewels. They ran to him and humbly spoke in accents of joy " Holy sir ! It is long since you had your bath. An inviting dinner awaits you ; is it your command that we bring it to you ?" " Be it so" said Chyavana. Immediately a magnificent dinner such as are served to emperors and another set, as are offered to sages and ascetics, were placed before him ; a costly seat was arranged for him there, and hard by his bed was ready. The viands were covered with creamy white silk. But Chyavana reduced all that to ashes and vanished from view. But they never felt the least annoyance ; they stood there that day and night, silent, reverent and eagerly expectant. Costly food of every variety, seats, beds, bathing materials, clothes, ornaments and everything that the sage might be likely to call for, were ever ready, awaiting his least commands. The sage could never come upon a flaw in their conduct though he tried his best. " King !" cried he " seat me in your chariot and yoke yourself and your

wife to it ; you shall drag me where I list." "Lord !" replied the king "Thrice-blessed am I. Shall I order my war-chariot or that used on ordinary occasions ?" "Nay." said Chyavana "get ready your war-chariot in which you enter in triumph into the capital of your enemies ; let it be duly adorned and furnished with all warlike materials ; and let the usual retinue accompany it." It was brought round with the king and the queen yoked to it. "What is your pleasure ?" asked Kusika in all humility. "Well" said Chyavana "Proceed gently that I may not be disturbed in the least. Call out your subjects to be present on the occasion. I mean to give away in no stinted measure such things as your subjects may desire ; see that nothing is amiss". The king ordered his ministers to carry out the Rishi's commands to the very letter ; gems, gold, silver, ornaments, lovely damsels, coin, seats, beds, kine, horses, camels, mules, elephants, chariots, dresses and everything that might be given away followed the chariot. The citizens were dumb-founded and cried out in fury "Alas ! alas ! what atrocity !" There was a whip in the chariot ; it had three strings ; at the end of each was attached a sharp iron thorn hard as adamant. Chyavana handled it deftly and lashed the king and his wife unmercifully ; blood flowed in torrents down their faces and backs, hands and legs ; their flesh was torn to shreds. For fifty days and nights, no food nor water had passed their lips ; sleep they knew not ; their limbs were tottering with fatigue and weakness ; yet those devoted souls grieved not, showed not the least annoyance or irritation. On the contrary, their faces glowed brighter and their looks were more cheerful for all that. The beholders were consumed with rage and grief, but were prevented from rescuing their beloved king and queen from the hands of the cruel sage or from wreaking dread vengeance upon him, all through fear of his terrible curse.

But, they whispered to themselves, "Utterly powerless are we to do anything in this affair, however uncontrollable may be our grief and rage. Yonder sage blinds us with his spiritual effulgence. Verily, inconceivable is the might engendered of thapas. Let that be. Unparalleled indeed is the utter patience of our king and no less the devotion of our queen. Behold how they drag the heavy chariot with bright faces and smiling looks." Chyavana found that Kusika and his wife were perfect in their reverence unto him, and gave away everything in the kingdom without let or stint; yet, he could not in the least produce a ripple in the calm serenity of their hearts.

And thus he tried most severely their devotion and firmness of heart; and finding that he had caught a Tartar, he gladly gave in. With unbounded admiration and love towards them, he sprang from the chariot, embraced them warmly and passed his hands over their limbs; when lo! their wounds, their sores, their fatigue and their weariness were things of the past. "Ask of me what you will; and it is yours to the utmost of my power" cried he. "Lord!" replied the king "you have conferred inestimable honor upon us by deigning to command us; what more could we desire?" "Now that I come to notice it" exclaimed Chyavana, "this is a lovely spot and holy. I mean to stay here some days and go through the observance of a vow. But you are weak and tired. Come to me to-morrow and I will see what I can do for you." "Nay, holy sir!" replied the king, "I humbly submit that I and my wife entertain in our hearts not even the slightest shadow of grief or irritation towards your noble self. You have been pleased to grant us the coveted privilege of serving you so long; and it has washed us pure and white of our sins. Nay, our youth, our beauty, our strength, our brilliance and our spiritual lustre are infinitely increased. My wife yonder is practically un-

recognizable; one would take her for an Apsaras of the world of Gods. We do not see on us the wounds caused by that dreadful whip. But nothing comes upon me as a surprise when I think upon your incalculable might and thapas." They took respectful leave of the sage and entered the city ; and their subjects knew no bounds to their joy and admiration of him. A happy night it was to them ; and the next day they betook themselves to where sat the sage of inscrutable acts. Meanwhile, the thickly wooded banks of the Ganga had been transformed by Chyavana's yogic might into a veritable abode of Indra, the ruler of Gods. Kusika and his wife beheld it with boundless surprise and entering the palace, they came upon the sage reclining on a splendid seat in a magnificent hall. At once he vanished from their sight and everything with him. They sought him out far and wide and discovered him in a distant part of that wood, seated in profound meditation upon the holy kusa grass. All at once the wood, the Apsarasas, the Gandharvas and the sage vanished from sight, and the banks of the Ganga were calm and silent as ever. The royal couple could not praise enough the illimiable might and glory of Chyavana and could not enough congratulate themselves on the unique favor shown them in being allowed to wait upon the Rishi. Chyavana read their hearts, called them to him, and gave them his hearty blessings; he seated them by his side and consoled them for the unheard of trials they were made to undergo. "Terrible were the tests that I subjected you to and right gloriously have you come through them. I have not been able to find the slightest flaw in your acts, words or thoughts. What shall I do for you, ? " It is a standing wonder to us "said the king "that we have not been reduced to ashes even though we have been with you so long. The highest boon we could ever deserve was to escape from being annihilated, root and

branch, when we were set to entertain you as a guest. Now has my life borne good fruit. I have realized the supreme aims of life. But, may I crave to know why your holiness deigned to make use of my palace for a time? You slept unmoved in the same bed for thrice seven days ; you vanished from our sight all on a sudden ; you burst upon our view again ; another three weeks you slept through unmoved ; you disappeared even while we were preparing your bath ; you reduced to ashes the costly dinner set before you ; you yoked me and my wife to your chariot ; you gave away untold wealth to all you met ; you displayed your yogic might in the woods marvellously. What had you at heart in doing all this ?" " Long ago " replied Chyavana " the gods were assembled in council and were discussing the future of humanity, when Brahma said to us 'There is to be a curious, blending of the brahmana and the kshatriya streams of energy in the line of Bhrigu'. I could hit upon no more effective means to prevent it than to annihilate your race. I came to you and to your wife and put you through the severest trials. Had you failed even in the slightest degree, it would have sealed your fate and that of your line, for my dread curse would have blasted it. But, you waited upon me even to my heart's content, joyfully, silently and reverently, without a murmur, without a shadow of irritation. The sight of my yogic might roused in your heart a thought of the comparative insignificance of kingly wealth and power. Hence, the third in descent from you will raise himself to the proud eminence of a brahmana by his severe thapas. The worlds will stand in dread awe of him. The members of the line of Bhrigu will be entitled to perform for the kshatriyas all rites and ceremonies. But, the turn of the karmic wheel will bring about dissension between them. The Bhargavas will be exterminated. Later on, there will be born in the line of Bhrigu the

mighty Aurva whose wrath and energy could easily consume the worlds to ashes. Yet, he will be persuaded to place the fire of his anger in the mouth of the mare Badava that roams the depths of the ocean. His son Richeeka will be reverently served upon by the deities of the various weapons, human and divine, for such is the will of the Lord. His son Jamadagni will take unto wife your grand-child, who will beget of him a son blazing with the energy of the kshatriya. Gadhi, of your line, will delight in the possession of a son Visvamitra who will elevate himself to the high level of a Brahmarshi by his unparalleled thapas. Thus two women will be the means of a kshatriya and a brahmana being born out of their castes."

"Holy sir!" replied Kusika "I consider it to be the mightiest boon that I have from you that my line is supremely honored ranking a Brahmarshi in it." They took respectful of the sage and returned to their city.—*M.B.Anusasana-parva 85-92.*

As to the birth of Visvamitra vide note on *Parasurama* P. 215—10.

His capital was Mahodaya—*Kamba-ramayanam.*

King Sudasa was celebrating a sacrifice, during which Sakthi, the son of Vasishtha, deprived Visvamitra of his energy and speech. Then Palasti Jamadagni got down for him from the orb of the sun, the speech named Sasarpari. She was the daughter of the sun, imperishable and deathless; she had wings; she bellowed with mighty voice, destroying poverty and bestowing new life and glory on gods and men. She destroyed the evil spirit that obsessed Visvamitra. The sage was overjoyed at his release and cried out to his clansmen, the Kusikas "Draw near". The two hymns beginning with Sasarpari (Rig-veda III. 21, 22) express the unbounded gratitude of the favoured Rishi.—*Sayana's quotation from the commentary of Shadgurusishya to the Anukramanika of the Rig-veda.*

Rishabha was a son of Visvamitra—*Ib. id.* III. 13, 14.

Once upon a time Visvamitra was performing a very severe course of austerities, when the God of Dharma put him to a cruel test; he came down in the shape of Vasishtha and said “Friend ! Give me food or I die.” Visvamitra, out of his generous heart, looked upon his mortal foe as the very god whom he adored and placed before him the best meal he could prepare. But, absorbed in it, he could not duly wait upon his honoured guest. Meanwhile, the other rishis supplied him with the food he seemed so much to need. So, when Visvamitra took to him the meal he had prepared steaming hot, his guest put it by and said “I do not want it. I have dined. Stay here,” and he vanished from view. But, Visvamitra, out of utter devotion to his guest, stood there rooted to the spot, and the food on his head ; the air was his only means of sustenance ; and his heart was ever centred upon his guest. A hundred years passed by and the God of Dharma came to him in the shape of Vasishtha. He beheld Visvamitra standing there motionless, in rapt devotion, with the food on his head ; and lo ! it was steaming hot and fresh as ever. The god was mightily pleased thereat and exclaimed, “Brahmarshi ! I cannot sufficiently admire your unparalleled devotion.” At once, his kshatriyahood fell away from Visvamitra and he stood forth as a glorious Brahmarshi.—*M. B. Udyoga-parva* 106.

Indra sent Tilottama and not Menaka to spoil his thapas.—*Kamba-ramayanam.*

When the enmity of Visvamitra and Vasishtha was at its height, the former once said to himself, “I shall cause this river Sarasvati to bring here my foe, when I can very easily dispose of him. So he sent for the goddess of the river and ordered her to bring Vasishtha bound to him even where he was. Sarasvati was well-acquainted with

Visvamitra's power and evil intentions and no less with Vasishtha's innocence and might ; she went to Vasishtha and said, " Lord ! Visvamitra has ordered me to bring you bound unto him. He will curse me dreadfully if I disobey him ; and I cannot escape your curse if I do obey him. In my heart I cannot find if to cause you the slightest annoyance or harm. Find me a way out of this difficulty." "Nay" said Vasishtha, " have no anxiety on my account. Obey Visvamitra and save yourself from harm." "Then" said Sarasvathi to herself, " it now rests with me as a sacred duty to see that this Maharshi comes to no evil, who so readily sacrifices himself to save me." She came upon Vasishtha when he was absorbed in meditation on the river side, and washed him away to where Visvamitra was and told him of it. Visvamitra was beside himself with joy at having his enemy in his power so easily and sought for a possible weapon to kill Vasishtha. Sarasvathi was frightened by his black wrath and resolved to have no share in the awful crime. In a moment she swept away Vasishtha to the other side of the river ; she had obeyed the behests of Visvamitra to the very letter ; she had frustrated too well his evil plans ; she had saved the life of Vasishtha. But, Visvamitra was mad with rage and cried out, " Thou wretched river-goddess ! Know what it is to juggle with me. Your water shall be turned to blood and none but Rakshasas shall drink of you."—*M. B. Salya parva* 43.

Kalmashapada, of the line of Ikshvaku, was one day returning to his capital after a long and weary hunt, when he came across Sakthi, the son of Vasishtha, in a narrow road. They quarrelled about the right of way ; the king grew wroth and lashed at the sage with his whip. " Evil-minded wretch ! you dare to lay your whip on an innocent and peaceful ascetic, even like a Rakshasa devoid of pity ; verily you shall become a Rakshasa and feed upon

human flesh." The king trembled with fear and sought to appease the sage. Now, Visvamitra and Vasishtha were trying their very best to secure the king as their disciple. The former knew of this interesting incident, came to the spot and concealing his presence there, watched the turn of events. He had great doubts about Sakthi's firmness of purpose ; he may yield to the king's prayers. So, Visvamitra ordered a Rakshasa, by name Kinkara, to obsess the king, who set about to kill and eat Sakthi and the other sons of Vasishtha. Yet, the bereaved father remained calm and serene ; no shade of anger crossed his heart against his rival. He resolved to put an end to himself and fell headlong from mount Meru ; but the Spirit of the Earth was too weak to bear him and let him down all gently. He threw himself into the blazing fire ; but, the God of Fire was consumed with the spiritual radiance of the sage. Vasishtha flung himself into the deep sea with a heavy rock round his neck ; the Spirit of Waters cried out in pain, unable to bear the sage and gently deposited him on the shore. He next bound himself tight with strong cords and cast himself into a foaming torrent; but, the Spirit of the River knew him well, and breaking asunder the cords that bound him, she brought him safe to the bank. Thereafter she was known as the *Vipasa*. Next he tried another eddying river ; it fled away from him in numerous directions, firmly convinced that the mighty God of Fire was consuming him ; thereafter she was called *Satadru*. Then, he came to know that Adrisyanti, the wife of Sakthi his son, had a boy in her womb and thought no more of making away with himself.—*M. B. Adiparva* 192, 193.

Once upon a time, at the Sandhi (junction) of the Treta and the Dwapara Yugas, a terrible draught fell on the land. Indra withheld the life-giving rains. Many

creatures human and otherwise died as they generally do at the fatal junction of the Yugas when they have grown too old. Jupiter began to move irregularly; the Moon moved towards the south with his orb reversed. The nights were dry and hot without the least suspicion of any dew or moisture ; as far the clouds, they were a thing of the far past ; the rivers ran low and slender. Lakes, tanks, wells, streams and torrents disappeared, afraid as it were of the terrible wrath of the offended Powers of nature. Everything was dry and parched; men met not together in counsel or friendly converse ; sacrifices to the Gods and to the Fathers, the study of the Holy Scriptures were clean neglected ; no one cared to till the iron ground or tend the starving kine ; buying and selling, import and export, trade and barter became a memory ; customs, usages, habits, traditions fell into disuse. The temples of the gods were deserted. Heaps of bones dotted the roads and bye-ways ; ruined towns, burnt hamlets, falling houses formed a fit setting to the never-ceasing cries of pain, lamentations, howls and shrieks; robbers, wicked kings, and lawless adventurers united to depopulate the country ; many fled away in affright to the jungles. There was nothing upon which the eye could rest for a while with delight—fanés of gods, men grown old with age and wisdom, star-eyed boys bursting with merriment and laughter, the low of cattle and the sweet bleating of lambs. The struggle for existence went on in dead earnest ; the Brahmanas were almost exterminated and there was none to protect them. Duty, law, justice, sympathy, charity, and other kindly virtues shunned the dreadful earth where man lay in wait for his brother to feed upon him. The restrained sages abandoned their peaceful hermitages, their gods, their fires, their fasts and their vows, and roamed far and wide with hungry eyes.

Visvamitra, the wise and the iron-willed, succumbed

to hunger and wandered far from his usual haunts. He was homeless and entirely neglectful of the worship due to the Holy Fires ; wife and children were long ago left behind to take care of themselves ; he fed upon what he could get, good and bad, pure and impure, permitted and prohibited. One day he came to where there was a small colony of outcast chandalas, cruel and carnivorous. Broken pots and pans, pieces of dog's flesh set out to dry, mouldering skeletons of pigs, asses and kine, announced the approach to their hamlet ; skins of snakes adorned the huts as also the garlands and clothes that decked of late disgusting corpses ; cocks crowed, asses brayed, pigs squealed, and pariah dogs barked in sweet unison to the harsh guttural sounds of the fighting chandalas, mad with drink and wrath ; owls hooted invisible from groves where the dread village deities were worshipped with bloody sacrifices; iron bells clanged harsh with the swaying of the wind-tossed branches. Visvamitra, faint with hunger, entered the hamlet, eagerly seeking for something to eat. He went there to beg, but could come upon nothing in the shape of meat or food or fruits or roots. "Alas!" cried he, "I can do no more" and fell down from sheer exhaustion. "How shall I escape a useless death ? What is the best thing I can do under the circumstances" thought he. Casting his eyes around him, he saw in a hut hard by, a piece of dog's flesh fallen on the ground along with the line on which it was hung up to dry. "Well" said he to himself, "I see no other way of keeping up the spark of life within me. I must even steal this welcome meat. A Brahmana may, if his life depends upon it, steal from his superiors, his equals and even his inferiors in times of dire distress. He should begin with the last; and I do but right in taking away this bit of flesh from these chandalas, who think lightly of slaying others. I do not see that stealing a thing is more sinful than

begging it from another. Yes, I am resolved to steal this meat." Sleep overcame him where he lay; and it was far into the midnight when he awoke. A heavy silence, dull and gloomy, fell upon the hamlet ; and Visvamitra slowly and cautiously crept into the hut. A chandala lay there as if in deep slumber ; blear-eyed, harsh-toned, hideous to see and cruel of heart, he almost startled the Rishi with his ominous tones of warning and menace. "What thief is it that move the line on which I have hung up my flesh to dry? I am wide awake, and you will find it so to your cost." Visvamitra felt his face burn with dire shame at that act of theft; he trembled with fear and said to the owner of the hut, "May your days be long on earth and happy. I am Visvamitra. I am dying of hunger. If you know me better, you will never seek to slay me." The words of the mighty Rishi electrified the chandala ; he sprang towards the sage with streaming eyes and folded hands and cried, "Alas; Reverend sir! What would you here at this dead of night?" Visvamitra sought to appease him with gentle words and replied, "My life-breaths burn low ; I am blind with hunger ; I would even steal away this dog's meat. Hunger drives a man to unholy deeds ; hunger knows not shame; hunger makes me commit this conscious crime ; hence, I mean to take away this piece of flesh. Death stares me in the face. I am half demented, and worn with fatigue. I cannot distinguish between what might be eaten and what not. I do know the rules of conduct, of right and wrong ; yet, I intend to steal this meat. You gave me no alms when I came to your abode ; hence, my heart turned towards this sin. The God of fire is the first among the shining Ones. He is their dispenser of food. He is thrice holy though he consumes every thing pure and impure. I, a Brahmana, am no less potent than he ; I walk in the way of Right ; I may feed upon any thing."

Chandala :— “ Holy sage ! I pray you to listen to me and having listened, do that which will take away in no wise from the duties of your order. Allow me to remind you, though all unworthy, of what your order ought to practise. The dog is the most unclean and the lowest of all animals ; and its thigh is the most unclean of its limbs. Reverend sir ! You do not act right ; this is food all unmeet for your pure lips ; and to steal it from a chandala, to whom it rightly belongs, makes the crime more hideous. Think of some other means to keep you alive. Your hankering for this dog’s meat will, of a surety, consume the merit you have laid by. It is the unique privilege of a man of intelligence to tread the path of virtue. You stand first among those who know the intricacies of right and wrong. You should not swerve from the Law ; you should not bring confusion into it.”

Vis. :—“ It is an age since any sustenance has passed my lips. I see no other way to keep myself alive. It is but the instinct of self-preservation that drives me to adopt any means, however questionable. Then it is time enough to attend to my duties. The warrior-caste follow Indra and the Brahmanas take Agni as their model. The God of fire in his aspect of the Holy Writ is the source of my strength. I mean to allay the pangs of hunger. No one should neglect the means to keep his body in good working order so long as he has to use it ; and certainly life is more useful than death. A dead man can observe no law, can discharge no duties. I do desire to live and do mean to feed upon this unclean meat, knowing full well that it is so. You must permit me. Again I tell you that if I remain alive, I can observe the law ; I can easily free myself from any impurity or sin that might dog me hereby; by rigid austerities and stern penance.”

Ch. :—“ I doubt whether this piece of flesh will keep

your life going or lengthen your days upon earth. Surely, you do not mean to say that this is akin to the Amrita, the Waters of Immortality. Go, beg some other more likely food. Turn your heart away from this unclean object. A dog is no fit thing for a Brahmana to touch."

Vis. :—“I am convinced that in this dreadful time of famine, I can find nothing better to eat ; nor have I the wherewithal to buy it. Famished, helpless, and despairing, this dog's meat is sweeter to me and more precious than your nectar.”

Ch. :—“Of the creatures that have five nails, only five are prescribed as food in the case of the first three castes. If you acknowledge the authority of the Sastras, turn your heart and feet away from this place.”

Vis. :—“Hunger goaded Agastya to feed upon the Asura Vathapi. I am in distress. My mind is a blank. I can not keep my hands away from this means of sustenance.

Ch. :—“Your reverence will do well to look out for some other likelier food. I will not have you commit this sin here. Surely, this is all unworthy of you. But, if it seems to you right and reasonable, I will not stand in your way.”

Vis. :—“Great Rishis like Agastya are our ideals of conduct ; and I do but follow their example. This dog's meat is to me holier and more worthy to be eaten than any other thing.”

Ch. :—“The example of the unrighteous can never form the eternal law of life. I would not have you deceive yourself by sophistry into committing this heinous sin.”

Vis. :—“A Rishi can never do anything that is sinful or degrading ; I see no difference between a dog and a deer ; hence, I intend to feed upon this.”

Ch. :—“Agastya was entreated by others to save countless Brahmanas, and in consequence he ate up Vathapi ; he was not drawn to it by desire ; and he did right and it

is no sin. Surely the Brahmanas are to be protected at any cost."

Vis. :—“I am a Brahmana and this my body is my best friend, very dear to me and worthy of all attention. So I see no harm in taking away this meat to feed it. My heart shrinks not from this apparently wicked act.”

Ch. :—“Dear life should even be sacrificed when it is placed against defiling oneself by eating of unclean things. Such self-restrained souls abide in glory in the mansions of light; their desires are omnipotent; and all this, because they put virtue above hunger.”

Vis. :—“You say true that such a right turn of mind brings one bright fame in the life to come. But I am alive and deprived of food, can never observe the duties of my order. I keep the vows and am always self-controlled. It is a prime duty to keep up this body upon which are built all my hopes of leading a right life here and hereafter. Hence, I mean to feed on this unclean meat. It is generally understood that greater merit accrues to him who goes deep into the question of what benefits a soul most and acts accordingly. But, even if I feed upon this with no clear views upon the above, I am not likely to degrade myself to your level, who feed upon dog's meat without the slightest glimmering of any knowledge about the self.”

Ch. :—“It seems to me that you should not give way to this temptation. Hence, I emphatically disapprove and condemn your act; you are a Brahmana fallen into evil ways.”

Vis. :—“Well, frogs croak unceasingly in the water; but, kine drink of it, all unmindful of their loud protests. It is not given to you to expound the mysteries of law. Be not lured into self-glorification.”

Ch. :—“Holy Brahmana! know me as your friend and

hence I grieve for you; I almost pity you. Let not desire lead your footsteps into sin ; stand this test like a man and set your eye on the right."

Vis. :—“ You call yourself my friend; if you wish me well, hasten to save me from impending death. My eyes are open to the mystery of Self. Hand me over the piece of flesh.”

Ch. :—“ It goes against my heart to give you this unclean thing; besides, I deprive myself of the means of life. I, the giver and you, the receiver, are equally defiled.”

Vis. :—“ Fear not. This sinful act will keep me living and I can very easily throw away any taint that might cling to me. The path of virtue is ever open to me if I am alive. Which do you choose, my life or my death?”

Ch. :—“ One's conscience is the best judge in matters of duty. You know better which is more sinful. Methinks he would stick at nothing who regards dog's meat as fit to eat.”

Vis. :—“ It is sinful verily to steal an unclean thing and eat of it; but there is an exception to the rule if it is a question of life or death. No great value is to be attached to the Sastras prohibiting such a diet. It is harmless to any being and free from the sin of untruth ; but it is likely to be condemned.”

Ch. :—“ If you base your act on the supreme desire to live, neither the Vedas, nor the conduct of the wise ones could form your standard. Then, I see no use in taking so much trouble to discriminate between eatables and non-eatables.”

Vis. :—“ Surely, eating of prohibited food is not as sinful as taking away the life of another. It is laid down that indulgence in strong drinks degrades a man ; but it is only mandatory. Now, I do acknowledge that this sin is on a level with sexual offences, but not so serious as to degrade

a man from the status of a Brâhmaṇa past all repair. It but takes away a little of the store of merit acquired."

Ch. :—“Well, I have done my best. This is a foul place, a chandala's abode ; it is dog's meat that you are after ; out of greediness, you are bent upon stealing it from a low out-caste who refuses to part with it. I wash my hands of it, and hold you and you alone responsible for the consequences ; and they are not very pleasant to a man of intelligence and probity.”

Visvamitra finding that he had nothing to prevent him, grabbed at the haunch of dog's meat and went back to where his wife and children lay in the woods, desiring to give them a share of it. He then set about to cook it and duly offered it to Indra, to Agni and to the other bright gods; for, even in that dire necessity he would not swerve from the duties of his order. Immediately the sky was black with rain-laden clouds and Indra cooled the parched earth with welcome showers, rendering back sweet life and energy to plants, animals and men. Visvamitra, the typical Brahmana, fed not of the dog's meat, for it was washed away in the flood ; but the gods and the Fathers were pleased thereat. It was nothing to him to free himself from any taint that might have clung to him by that sinful act.—*M. B. Santiparva*, 141.

Vasishtha or Apava, the son of Varuna, was engaged in meditation on mount Meru. One day Devarshis, Devas and the Vasus came down to his hermitage and roamed among its holy groves. Nandini, the calf of Surabhi the Cow of Plenty, was grazing quietly under a tree ; the wife of Dyau, one of the Vasus, pointed it out to her husband curious to know all about it. “He who drinks of its milk” explained Dyau “will preserve joyful youth for ten thousand years.” “Now that I remember it” said she “I have a very dear friend on earth by name Jithavathi, the daughter

of Useenara. I would have her drink of its milk and enjoy undying youth. You will secure it for me at any cost." Dyau, the uxorious husband, could not refuse her, and his brother Vasus helped him to steal the calf. Later on, Vasishtha sought for it in vain, and coming to know what transpired, cursed the Vasus to be born on earth as men. They entreated him to mitigate the sentence. "Well" said he "the others will come back within a year ; but Dyau will have to remain on earth very long, a spotless celibate all his life. He will a be a paragon of learning, wisdom, valour and devotion." And he was known on earth as Bheeshma. *Ib. Adiparva.* 106.

Kandu, a sage of restrained self, was engaged in stern austerities on the banks of the Gomati. Indra was afraid of a rival who might dispossess him of his kingdom and sent Pramlocha, the Apsaras, to lure him away. Kandu fell under the spell of her beauty and witcheries, and they passed a hundred and fifty years in a sweet dream of delirious love. One day, she bowed low before him and said, "Lord ! it is very long since I came down to you. Have I your leave to go ?" "Nay" said he "stay with me yet a while"; for, he could not bear to live away from her. And so, time after time; and she yielded, in mortal dread of his anger and curses. Long after, one fine evening, Kandu suddenly got up and hastened out of the hermitage "Whither away, my Lord!" queried his love. "Light of mine eyes!" replied the sage "the bright sun hangs low in the west. It is time to offer the evening prayers ; and it entails grievous sin to omit them." Pramlocha clapped her hands in high glee "Ho ! Ho ! And the sun sets, is it ? It seems you compute your days by something higher than the standard of the gods and the fathers." "My love!" said the sage, "I saw you here on the banks of this river this morning and took you to my abode. And now it is sunset. I do not

see anything wonderful in this. I do not see anything to excite your laughter," Said Pramlocha "I am glad you remember that I came here of a morning. But years past count have gone by ; and it is sunset but not the first." Kandu stood aghast with amaze. "Well, is it so very long since you came unto me ?" "Holy sir, only nine hundred and seven years, six months and three days by mortal count." "What ! it seems to me but a day since I saw you; and a large portion of it is yet to be gone through. Do you speak true, or is it a pleasant jest ?" "Reverend sir I would I dream of uttering an untruth unto you, the soul of innocence and virtue ? Besides, have you not laid your commands on me to that effect?" Kandu was almost beside himself with grief and shame, "Alas ! I am lost. I have destroyed the glorious edifice of stern tapas that I have patiently built up through years of effort. I have thrown away the precious treasure that wise and holy men value so high. Some one has sent this siren here to beguile me from my tapas. I practised stern self-control to attain the glorious heights of divine wisdom which the waves of hunger and thirst, pain and pleasure, old age and death reach not. Some one has got at my secret and has laid his axe at the root of success. A single spark of the deadly fire of desire is potent enough to consume to ashes the hard-won knowledge that leads us to the feet of Him whom the Holy Scriptures glorify. Desire is the shortest and the pleasantest road to hell. Thou, vile creature ! Avaunt ! Well have you done the behests of him that sent you. But, I do not think it just to consume you with the fire of my wrath, as I am tempted to do. Walking seven steps with another is ample basis for friendship to build itself upon. And we have been together for years past count. I will not harm you, the partner of my joy and shame. Why, I see not how you are to blame for it. I am but a fool to vent my

anger upon *you*. Somebody kick me from here to the ends of the world as an idiot who cannot think right and eschew evil." *V. P. I.* 15.

Sindhudweepa, Devapi, Arshthishena and Visvamitra, all of royal blood, raised themselves to the coveted eminence of Brahmanas. It was during the Kritayuga and the hermitage of Rishi Usangu was sanctified by their presence.—*M. B. Salyaparva* 40.

Once upon a time, Matanga, the son of a Brahmana, was sent by his father to conduct a sacrifice, and, on the way, he struck furiously on its neck the young mule that was yoked to his carriage. The fond mother observed it and consoled the calf saying "Grieve not, my Child. It is only a Chandala that hits you, for, a Brahmana would not be so cruel, he the friend of every living thing. This young man but proclaims his low birth." Matanga sprang down in dread and fear and with humble entreaty besought the mule to explain his words. "Thou, soul of mercy ! How do you know me for a Chandala born ? What low-caste wretch shall I call my father?" And to him replied the mule "Your mother, in a fit of intoxication, bore you to a low barber, even a Soodra. You are a Chandala and are miles away from Brahmanahood." Matanga went back to his father, told him the dreadful news and sought the dark forests to free himself from the vile taint and attain the status of a Brahmana. The very gods quaked in terror at his consuming energy. Indra appeared to him times out of number and said, "You fool ! you will simply kill yourself. You are and you will be miles and miles away from Brahmanahood." For numberless decades did Matanga persevere with grim obstinacy in spite of Indra's warnings. "Beware" said Indra to him again and again, "you are setting yourself against the law. A born Chandala, you will never become a Brahmana in this body. The Jeeva passes

incalculable ages in the elemental kingdoms as Bhootha, Pretha, Pisacha, Sakini, Dakini, Koosmanda, etc.; then, he gradually passes through the mineral, the vegetable and the animal kingdoms. He is then individualised and reaches the human levels. For thousands of years, he occupies the bodies of low out-castes, Chandalas, Pulkasas and others. A thousand births there and he becomes a Soodra. Under ordinary conditions thirty births in a Soodra body bring him up to the level of a Vaisya. Sixty births as a Vaisya elevate him to the rank of a Kshatriya. Sixty births as a Kshatriya lift him to the very lowest levels of Brahmanahood. Two hundred births in that, promote him to the class of Brahmans that live by the profession of arms. Three hundred births therein qualify him to be born as a Brahmana, who is allowed to recite and meditate upon the potent mantras. Four hundred of such births convert him into a Brahmana who studies the Holy Scriptures with the eye of wisdom. But, joy and sorrow, desire and hate, pride and lust, fiercely attack the Brahmana in his early days. If he triumphs over them, he reaches the heights of knowledge and power and bliss ; if he goes under, he falls, even to the lowest births, like an over ripe fruit." Again and again came the warning ; but as often did Matanga persisted in his mad endeavour. In the end, he gave up from sheer exhaustion and Indra granted him the powers of taking any form he liked and roaming through the worlds at his will. Women pay respect to him and worship as Chandodeva, and invoke him during joyful rites. Such is Brahmanahood, hard to attain.—*M. B. Anusasanika-parva 3, 4, 5.*

Once upon a time, there lived a king, Veethahavya by name, of the line of Saryathi, the son of Vaivasvata Manu. His sons attacked and slew Haryasva, king of Kasi ; again they came on and drove away from his kingdom Sudeva, the son of Haryasva. Divodasa, the son of Sudeva, fought long

and fiercely with his enemies, but was vanquished and took refuge with Rishi Bharadvaja. Him the king entreated for a son to wipe away the black stain that lay on his line. Bharadvaja performed for the suppliant the rite known as Puthrakameshti and Pratardana was born unto him. Through the yogic might of the sage, he attained the age of thirteen as soon as he was born ; and was endowed with extraordinary strength, knowledge, wisdom and energy. In fact, all the powers in the world abode in him. Divodasa sent his son to exterminate the enemies of his race. Pratardana found it child's play to lay low the heads of the sons of Veethahavya ; the father, in wild affright, fled for refuge to the hermitage of Bhrigu. The Rishi promised him protection and gave him a place among his disciples. Soon after, Pratardana was there in hot pursuit and reverently requested to be announced to the sage as desirous of seeing him. Bhrigu met him without the premises and accorded to him due hospitality. " What can I do for you, my son ?" asked he. " Reverend sir ! " replied Pratardana " Veethahavya, my enemy, has come here. His sons have despoiled my kingdom, have robbed me of my treasures and have slain my kith and kin. Give him over to my righteous vengeance. It is a sacred duty that I owe my ancestors." But Bhrigu answered him all calmly " I do not remember to have any Kshatriya in our midst. There are none but Brahmanas here." Pratardana bowed low and laughed gently. " Give me leave to go away and may I find your heart ever warm towards me. But, you have won for me an unparalleled victory, though all unconsciously. Veethahavya yonder, has renounced his caste through fear of me." Thus Bhrigu, out of his inconceivable might, raised Veethahavya to the envied rank of a Brahmana. His son Gritsamada and after him many of his line, were high-souled Brahmanas and Rishis. *M. B, Anusanikaparva 8.*

Visvamitra is one of the Saptharshis of this Vaivasvatha Manvantara along with Vasishtha, Kasyapa, Atri, Jamadagni, Gautama and Bharadvaja.—*V. P. III. I.*

The greatness of Visvamitra.

1. His wrath consumed to ashes the hundred sons of Rishi Vasishtha.
2. On another occasion there arose from his anger countless Bhootas, Prethas, Pisachas and Rakshasas.
3. He adorned the famous line of the Kusikas in which numerous Rishis had their birth.
4. Sunas-sepha, son of Richeeka, was about to be offered as a victim during the sacrifice of King Ambareesha. Visvamitra taught him two mighty verses that saved him from a horrible death. (They are found in Rig Veda, Ashtaka I, Adhyaya 2, Varga 12; Yajurveda, Kanda II, Prapathaka, Anuvaka 11; Ib, Kanda III, Prapathaka 4, Anuvaka 11. They form a portion of the Gayathri Upasthana mantras recited by the twice-born during their evening prayers).
5. Harischandra propitiated the gods by his sacrifices and was in consequence adopted by Visvamitra as his son.
6. Fifty of his sons would not render due reverence to Devaratha, another adopted son of his, (formerly Sunas-sepha) and were cursed to become Chandalas in consequence.
7. He raised Trisanku aloft to the abode of the gods even in his physical body, and created new worlds for his sake.
8. The river Kausiki, sacred to the gods and the Rishis, is his sister.
9. Rambha (Panchachooda) who tried to beguile him from his tapas, was cursed to become a senseless block of stone.
10. Vasishtha, out of dread of this Rishi, threw himself bound into the river Vipasa.
11. He officiated as Purohit to Trisanku and the sons

of Vasishtha cursed him in consequence to feed upon dog's meat. Accordingly, during a dreadful famine, he was about to eat of it, when Indra, out of the great love and regard he had for him, made away with it in the guise of a hawk. The curse was over and he lauded high Indra, his benefactor, who sent down the welcome rains. Visvamitra is the Regent of the star that shines between Dhruva the Pole-star and the Saptharishis, the Great Bear.—*M. B. Anusanka-parva 6.*

The sons of Dhrishta, the fifth son of Vaivasvatha Manu, were born Kshatriyas, but raised themselves to the rank of Brahmanas. Agni-vesya of the line of Narishyantha, the seventh son, gave birth to the Agnivesyayana Brahmanas. Nabhaga son of Dishta, the fourth son of Ikshvaku, was degraded to be a Vaisya by his karma—*Bh. IX 2.*

34. Safe custody :—

Then Janaka violated his trust in setting it up as a prize and Rama was equally wrong in having broken it. So, it is more reasonable to infer that it was given him to worship and to use in destroying his enemies. “ Mahadeva was pleased with him and gave Janaka the wonderful bow with which he destroyed his enemies”—*Kurma purana 21.* “ I set up this bow as a prize which Mahadeva gave me out of his grace”—*Padma purana, Kalpanthara Ramayana.*

*190. Daksha :—*He came out of the thumb of Brahma, and was one of the Manasaputras. He married Prasoothi, the daughter of Swayambhuva Manu. Of his daughters, Murthi married Dharma and was the mother of the Rishis Nara and Narayana; Swaha married Agni and was the mother of Pavaka, Pavamana and Suchi; Swadha married the Pithris and gave birth to Vayuna and Dhoorini ; Sathi married Siva. Again, during the Chakshusha Manvantara, he was born as the son of the Prachethasas and Marisha. He married Asikni, and was the father of ten thousand Haryasvas, thou-

sand Sabalasvas and sixty daughters. Ten were married to Dharma, two to Bhootha, two to Angiras, two to Krisasya, four to Tharksha, twenty-seven to Soma and thirteen to Kasyapa.—*Bh. IV. 1.*

Rudra has two sides—terrible and good. The Sa-tha-rudreeya speaks of his terrible aspects, which are the fearful Rudhras. But his good aspect is praised as—“*ya te Rudra siva tanu aghorapakasini*”—that good aspect of thine, Rudra, which is not terrible and which does not be token harm”. From this his Siva-thanu arose, his puranic name Siva. Likewise his name Sankara, the doer of good, is found in the Rig Veda I. 43, 6. “*Sam Nah karat*—may he do good to us.” His aspect as Agni Swishtakrit is honor'd with the choicest of oblations. But as Rudra, his bhaga or sacrificial share is the Samsrava of the manthin cup of the Soma juice (*Taittireeya Samhitha*, III. 1. 9) and *Akhu* mouse, (*Ib. I. 8. 6.*). The latter is to be understood as a cake first placed on the mud dug up by the mouse. The Samsrava is said to be the spray splashed about when, the Soma creeper is being beaten and pressed to fill the manthin cup, the contents of which are held up for Chanda and Marka, but offered to Indra. The above Samhitha speaks of it thus :—“Rudra ! To thee is this share which thou desired to have. Enjoy it”. “The Gods excluded Rudra from the sacrifice ; he pierced it with an arrow. They propitiated him and he became Agni Swishtakrit or he who makes the rite of ours well sacrificed. That portion of the sacrifice which was pierced by Rudra is Rudreeya, terrible ;—by eating a bit of it Pooshan lost his teeth and ever afterwards, an oblation of flour is made to him ; by eating of it Bhaga had his eyes burnt, so they say Bhaga is blind.—*Taittireeya Samhitha II. 6, 8; 3, Sathapatha Brahmana I, 7, 4, 5.*

The Prajapathis performed a Yagna, when the Devas and the Rishis graced the occasion with their presence.

Daksha entered the assembly and all rose to receive him except Brahma and Siva. Daksha saluted his father Brahma and with his permission took his seat. But he was so mortified by the conduct of Siva, that he could not contain himself and indignantly broke forth thus :—“ Rishis, Devas and Agni ! Behold this disgraceful conduct of Siva, my son-in-law, nay, my disciple. This senseless fellow would not trouble himself so much as rise up and receive me. He has no sense of respect or disrespect, of purity or impurity. He is utterly untouched by injunctions and prohibitions. Know you what he does ? He roams about the burning grounds, with his Bhoothas, Prethas and Pisachas at his heels, now laughing, now weeping ; the ashes of the dead lie in thick layers on his body and their bones hang round his neck and arms as ornaments. He calls himself Siva (Auspicious) ; but Asiva (Inauspicious) would suit him better ; he is ever intoxicated and his companions are the unclean and senseless Bhoothas. I obeyed the orders of Brahma in giving him my daughter to wife, and have I not reason to curse the day ?” Siva sat on unmoved. Daksha continued his stream of invectives and ended by cursing him. “ This vilest of Devas shall not have a share in the offerings made to Indra, Upendra and others during the holy sacrifices.” In wild rage he rushed from the hall of sacrifice.

Nandi, the chief companion of Siva, would not tamely put up with the gross and wanton insult offered to his master. In angry tones he hurled back the unkind words of Daksha and reproved such of the audience as expressed their approbation of it. “ Siva bears ill-will to none ; rather Daksha who sees harm where there is none. It is only the ignorant that follow Daksha and blame Siva. He sees no difference between the body and the soul ; hence he shall be as fond of women as a beast and shall be blessed with a goat’s head as a sign of it. He confounds truth and false-

hood and publicly insults Siva. Those who follow him shall not go beyond the Karma-kanda and shall be eternally whirled along the cycle of births and deaths ; they shall have no scruples and shall eat of anything, pure or impure; they shall make a living out of their learning, their observances, and their austerities. Their riches, their body and their senses shall be all in all to them. They shall beg from door to door."

Bhrigu, the leader of the Brahmanas present, threw back the curses of Nandi on the followers of Siva. " His followers shall be opposed to the holy scriptures and be known as Pashandas. Their purity shall be sullied and their understanding clouded ; coated with ashes and adorned with garlands of bones and matted hair, they shall frequent places where the wine cup goes round. The Vedas lay down the approved path for all time, and the Rishis of old followed their injunctions. The divine Janardana is their root. You shall only attain to where the Tamasic Siva reigns the Lord of Bhoothas and Pisachas." Thereupon Siva and his followers left the place and the Prajapathis conducted the sacrifice for a thousand years.

Some time after, Brahma made Daksha the chief of the Prajapathis and his pride knew no bounds. He resolved to celebrate the sacrifice known as the Brihaspathi yagna and to it he invited all except Siva and his wife Sati. She heard of the grand preparations made by her father, and was impatient to witness the yagna; and much against his will, Siva yielded to her importunities. She went to the sacrificial hall of her father, Siva's followers accompanying her. Daksha would not recognise her, nor was any share set apart in the sacrifice for Rudra. Her mother and her sisters alone dared to offer a welcome. Furious with rage, she turned to her father and said " Siva knows no enemy; all are the same to him. But, you alone

are conspicuous by your envy of his virtues. The evil things you have attributed to him exist but in your imagination; for, the gods and the Rishis know it and still worship him. Well, a dutiful wife must not hear her husband calumniated. If she is strong enough, she must pull out the tongue of the rogue by the roots, or if possible, kill him ; if not, she must close her ears against the slander and leave the place; best she puts an end to herself. I am ashamed to keep this body that you gave me. I shall free myself from this taint of connexion with you" and she threw herself into the fire. There was a great uproar and her attendants were ready to spring at the throats of her enemies, when Bhrigu, who acted as the chief priest, in, voked the Ribhus; they in no time dispersed the ghostly followers of Siva.

Narada was at hand to carry the news to Rudra, who bit his lips in anger, and plucking out a tuft of matted hair from his head, dashed it down on the earth. Veerabhadra the terrible, rose out of it. His huge body was dark as the clouds and blotted the high heavens from view. He had one thousand hands, three eyes blazing like the sun, terrible teeth and locks of hair bright as fire. A garland of human skulls hung round his neck and curious weapons flashed in his hands. "What are they behests, Lord !" cried he. "Lead my followers to where proud Daksha sits and destroy him and his yagna" ordered Siva. In Daksha's hall of sacrifice, the priests, the Brahmanas and their wives saw coming afar from the north a huge cloud of dust ; and upon the heels of it rushed Veerabhadra and his ghostly army, some brown, some yellow, some like huge sea-monsters, some with no form and all terrible to look at. They pulled down the buildings, put out the fires, broke the implements of sacrifice and scattered them around ; they defiled the place ; they hunted the Rishis and Devas, and

frightened their women. Maniman caught hold of Bhrigu and tied him fast like a sheep, while Veerabhadra plucked out his beard. Chandeesa captured Soorya; Nandi captured Bhaga and pulled out his eyes, for, he had often glanced at Daksha in encouragement. Pooshan bared his teeth in uproarious laughter, while Daksha was holding forth against Siva; but Veerabhadra pulled out his teeth one by one. Daksha was caught in the iron grip of Veerabhadra, who tried to sever his head, but in vain. At last, he found the task easier with the sacrificial implements. His work over, he departed with his followers for Kailasa.

The Devas went up to Brahma and poured forth their complaints to him. "It was not unknown to me" said he "what would take place ; and I and Vishnu kept ourselves aloof in consequence. You did wrong in not allowing Siva to participate in the sacrificial offerings. Know you not, that the dread Lord of the universe is your master and mine?" He betook himself with the Devas to where Siva sat deep meditation for the good of the universe, under a huge banyan tree in mount Kailasa. "Pardon, Lord of all, your children who have unwittingly gone against you and the Law. The eyes of Bhaga, the head of Bhrigu, the teeth of Pooshan and the life of Daksha, let these be restored. Grant it that the yagna be completed. May the gods and the Rishis be relieved of the pain of broken limbs. From this day, the remnants of the sacrificial offerings are yours." Siva smiled gently and said, "Nay, Daksha is but a child, and I have clean forgotten that he ever showed me any disrespect. But, I have to drag back the unwary feet of my children from the dark paths of Maya. Daksha's head is burnt up ; he shall have the head of a goat instead. Bhaga shall see his sacrificial offerings through the eyes of Mithra. Poosha shall be offered cakes made of flour and in company

with other Devas, he shall make use of the sacrificer's teeth. The Devas and the Rishis shall have their broken limbs set right ; but, those who have lost them shall use the arms of the Aswins and the hands of Poosha. Bhrigu too shall be given a goat's head." The gods thanked Siva and reverently invited him to the sacrifice. Brahma came too and Daksha, with unclouded eyes, rendered due worship to Siva. At the end of the yagna appeared Vishnu to accept his share of the offerings, and said, " Daksha ! It is only through ignorance that men see any difference between myself and Siva. We are one, I, Siva and Brahma. We assume different names and forms to create, sustain and destroy the Universe."—*Bh. IV 2.*

The gods and the Rishis were going up to Daksha's sacrifice, when Uma said to her spouse " How is it you go not ? " " The gods have ruled it that I have no share of the sacrificial offerings." " I am grieved beyond expression that you, the god of gods and the embodiment of all perfections, should be so insulted." Sankara left her there in charge of Nandi and proceeded straight to the hall of sacrifice and destroyed it. Sacrifice sprang into the sky as a deer and Rudra followed it in hot pursuit. A drop of sweat fell from his forehead ; and out from it sprang a dreadful Being, short, with blazing eyes, dark hue and green beard and dressed in flaming red. It was covered all over with hair. In a moment, the Deity of Sacrifice was reduced to ashes and the Terror chased the Gods and the Rishis. Brahma intervened and calmed down the anger of Siva. " Lord ! These have been punished enough and will not be in a hurry to deny you a share of the sacrificial offerings. This terrible Being you have created shall live on earth as Fever. Dissipate its might ; else the worlds will be one hideous ruin." The heat in the head of the elephants, benzoin (Sila jathu), the green scum on the water, the skin

of snakes, the foot-disease of cattle, saline soil, the incrustation on the eyes of cattle, the throat-disease of horses, the crests of peacocks, the eye-diseases of cuckoos, the bilious diseases of sheep, the hiccough of parrots, the exhaustion of tigers, and the fever among men are manifestations of the energy of the dire Being—*M. B. Santiparva*, 289.

Dadheechi saw that Siva came not to the sacrifice of Daksha and said in anger to those around “ This rite shall come to no good, for, you honor not the Lord Siva. You do it out of ignorance ; but who can ward off the arrows of Fate?” He looked with the eye of spirit and saw Siva and Parvati seated on the mount Kailasa, with Narada hard by. He soon came to know what was about to happen, and was glad of it. The gods were unshaken in their resolve not to invite Rudra. Said the sage “ It is no less than the sin of Brahminicide to refuse worship to those that deserve it, as also to offer it to those that deserve it not. The God of gods will surely come here and I await to see what will become of you.” Exclaimed Daksha “ There are eleven Rudras with matted hair and them I know. Who is this Maheswara, this Rudra all new ?” “I see” replied Dadheechi “that you are all bent upon not inviting Mahesa. I know none that stands above him. And you are surely seeking the ruin of your own sacrifice.” “Then” said Daksha “behold, I make an offering in this golden vessel to Vishnu, the God of gods. He is omnipotent and no other.” At the same time Parvati said to Siva “Dear lord! What would you advise me to observe if I want you to secure a share in the sacrificial offerings ? To whom should I address my prayers,” “To none other” replied Siva “but myself.” “Is it even so?” rejoined Parvati, “I never knew a husband that did not brag before his wife.” “ Nay, my dear!” broke in Siva “ Say not so. Wait while I put forth my might.” Veerabhadra was created and Uma went forth with him in the guise of Bhadrakali.—*Ib.* 290.

The trident launched by Siva destroyed the sacrifice of Daksha and advanced upon the Rishis Nara Narayana who were in deep meditation in their hermitage at Badari. It dashed itself fiercely against the broad breast of Narayana and his hair turned green ; hence one of his names *Munjakesa*. He, with a mighty snort, drove it back powerless to Siva, Mahadeva, in furious wrath, rushed at the Rishis. Narayana caught him round his neck and it turned black. He plucked a blade of the sacred grass and converted it into a dreadful axe which he threw at Siva. It was shattered to pieces ; hence Narayana was called *Khandaparasu* (broken-axe). And thus they went on until the worlds grew mad with fear. Whereupon, Brahma, the Ancient, came down and implored them to desist. "Sankara ! doer of good ! It ill becomes you to forget your trust and ruin it. These martial weapons are not meet for such hands as yours. The supreme Brahman has chosen to manifest Itself in one of Its aspects as Nara and Narayana. Through Its grace I came into being. You are eternal, but you came into manifestation from his Anger (force of Disintegration). Let us reverence this manifestation of the Brahman and let the worlds rest in peace." Rudra calmed down and honor'd Narayana, who said to him with a smile "He who knows you, knows me. He who reverences you, reverences me. There is not the slightest difference between us. It is foolish to think otherwise. The mark of your trident on my breast shall ever shine as the beautiful mole Sreevatsa and the black band on your throat caused by the pressure of my arms will add to your lustre and give you the name of *Sreekantha*.—*Ib.* 352.

The Devas and the Rishis propitiate him by reciting the *Sata-rudreeya*—*M. B. Anusanikaparva* 265.

During the Devayuga, the gods performed a sacrifice as enjoined by the Vedas. They knew not Rudra aright

and reserved no portion for him of the offerings. Now, sacrifice is of various kinds *Loka yagna* (seeking the esteem and good regard of the world); *Kriya yagna*, (the sixteen sacraments); *Griha yagna* (Agnihothra and such as require the assistance of a wife); *Panchabhotha yagna* (the happiness arising from the objects of the senses); of these four was the world formed. To destroy the second and the third enjoined by the Sastras, Siva made a fearful bow of the first and the last, sixty hands in length. Vashat-kara was its string..... Having thus routed the Devas and the Rishis, Rudra laughed at them and stood with bent bow to prevent them from coming back. Then the Goddess of speech, invoked by the Devas, cut away the bowstring and the huge bow straightened itself. Siva was thus disarmed and the Devas approached him with sacrificial offerings and implored his forgiveness. Rudra grew calm and placed his anger in the ocean, where it drinks the briny deep always.—*M. B. Saupthikaparva* 18.

Brihaspathi induced Daksha to perform a horse-sacrifice. Rudra was to have a share of it, as he and Nandi performed Samitra, (killing the sacrificial animal.) But being denied his share, Rudra, Nandi and their ghostly troops destroyed the sacrifice and shattered it day and night. The bow and an arrow given him by Brahma stood Rudra in good stead on the occasion. The Sacrifice ran to Brahma for protection with its heart transfixated by Siva's arrow. Then Brahma said to him "Thou shalt stand in the sky at the head of the stars and in the high company of Rudra and Soma. Eternal thou shalt be, and the Star of stars (*Mrigasiras*)."
Then Rudra and Vishnu shot an arrow at each other; but neither was in any way the worse for it. Vishnu, in his joy, clasped his arms round Rudra's neck and cried "Pardon me. Thou art indeed without beginning or end. Thou art the Great Teacher.

Thou art above karīna ;" and Rudra's neck grew black thereby. Nandi struck Vishnu on the head with the bow Pinaka ; but Vishnu stood perfectly composed and with a look, deprived Nandi of all power of motion. In the end, Vishnu prescribed a share in the sacrifice to Rudra and made whole the shattered Sacrifice. The blood which flowed from the wounded deer is still seen at day-break.—*Hari vamsa*, 222.

Daksha brings Vishnu from the Swetha-dweepa and makes him his Yagna-purusha—*Kasi khanda*.

17. *Seetha* :—Seetha, meaning the furrow, is a Vedic Goddess. Rig Veda IV, 57 is devoted to the agricultural deities; verses 6 and 7 praise Seetha as follows, “Auspicious Seetha ! Be present. We glorify thee that thou mayest be propitious to us. That thou mayest yield us abundant fruit.” The Yajur Veda has four stanzas about Seetha to be recited when drawing four furrows at the ceremony of preparing the sacrificial ground.

The *Taittireeya Brahmana* II, 3. 10, has the following passage about the bewitching effect of adorning the face with the Sthagara alankara, on performing a certain sacrificial rite:—Prajapathi created king Soma. The three Vedas were created after him. Soma held them in the palm of his hand. Then Seetha Savithri the daughter of Savitha, became enamoured of king Soma, who however loved another damsel named Sraddha (faith). Seetha went to her father Prajapathi and said, “ Salutation to thee ! I approach thee and seek thy help. I love king Soma but he loves Sraddha.” Prajapathi prepared the Sthagara alankara for her and adorned her face with it, having performed a certain rite to give it effect (refer to the original). Seeing her thus enchantingly beautiful Soma said to her “ Live with me,” “ Nay ” said she “ tell me a source of happiness. Tell me what you have in your hands.” He handed over to her

the three Vedas. So, women wish to get happiness. He who wishes to become loveable or whom one may wish to become so, the prescribed rite shall be performed over him and his face decorated with the Sthagara alankara.

In this story the father Prajapathi seems to be the same as Savitha, from whom Seetha derives her patronymic Savithri. Sraddha is another daughter of the Sun or Savitha (*Satha patha Brahmana XI vii. 3, 11.* (*Sraddha vai sooryasya duhita*). Savitha gives his daughter Soorya in marriage to the moon (*Sankhayana Brahmana 18, 1, Niruktha 12, 8*). All the asterisms are Prajapathi's daughters wedded to the Moon, who however is very fond of one of them Aldebaran (Rohini). They complained to their father and Soma was punished with the disease of consumption during the dark fortnight. (*Taittireeya Samhitha, II iii, 5*). Sraddha, whom the moon of our story loves in preference to Seetha, may well be taken as Rohini, who seems to have had several names in the Vedic literature, Rohini, Soorya, Sraddha, Ahalya, etc., Seetha, the wife of Rama, seems to be identical with the Vedic Seetha, in spite of the change she has undergone in the Ramayana. There are three indications of the identity:—

1. According to *Ramayana VII. 17*, Seetha was formerly Vedavathi, daughter of Kusadhwaja, the son of Brihaspathi. She was so named because her father was ever reciting the Vedas and she was born as his Vedic speech embodied. She sat in austere tapas, resolved to marry none but Vishnu. But, when Ravana laid his foul hands upon her, she threw herself into the fire, crying that she would be born again and become his fate. She came down again as Seetha, the wife of Rama and her abduction by Ravana was the cause of his death. Though Seetha's father Savitha is changed into Kusadhwaja, her name Vedavathi indicates her identity with the Vedic

Seetha, the repository of the three Vedas. Brihaspathi himself, the Lord of words, is made the grandfather of this speech embodied as a girl.

2. Anasooya, the wife of Athri, meets Seetha during her voluntary exile in the forests and decorates her with divine ornaments and gives her an *angaraga*, a charming ointment for the body. The incident of the Sthagara alankara is reproduced.

3. Seetha is found in the ground when Janaka (Seeradhwaja) ploughs it before a sacrifice. As the Seetha mantras are recited when preparing the sacrificial ground, Seetha's marvellous birth from that ground indicates her to be the Vedic goddess herself.

But, it does not follow that because the Vedic goddess is reproduced in a changed manner in Seetha, her Vedic husband, the Moon, is reproduced in our Rama. This perhaps might have been if the Vedic literature always spoke of Seetha as the wife of the Moon. But it is not so. In Paraskara Grihya Soothra of the Sukla-Yajur Veda are incorporated certain mantras for Seetha yagna, sacrifice to Seetha on the field and in them Seetha is invoked as the wife of Indra :—"Indra's wife Seetha, I invoke, in whose substance dwells the prosperity of all Vedic and worldly works. May she not abandon me in whatever work I do. Swaha! I invoke at this sacrifice the firm One rich in horses rich in cows, rich in delight, who indefatigably supports living beings, who is the field wreathed with threshing floors. May she not abandon me Swaha!"...Janaka, her father, is aptly surnamed Seeradhwaja, one who has the plough as his banner, a fit name for the Goddess found in the furrow.

Taitireeya-Aranyaka I. 1. 5 relates the following story :—

"Rudra stood resting his head on the end of his bended bow. One end of it was in the sky and the other rested on the earth. Indra assumed the form of ants, and cut off the

bowstring. The staff took away his head ; and it is the same as is seen in the colours of the cloud as the rainbow. This is the bow of Samyu the son of Brihaspathi. This is the bow of Rudra" ... Seetha may be compared to the Rig Vedic Saranyu, the daughter of Thwashta, the wife of the Sun-Vivaswan and the mother of the Aswins. The whole world assembles to witness the wedding of Thwashta's daughter, who being made Savarna, of the same colour as that of her husband and hidden from the gaze of the mortals, is given to Vivasvan ; but she disappears leaving behind the Asvins to whom she had given birth. She might be the same as Saranyu. This recalls the incident of beautifying the appearance of Seetha Savithri by the application of the Sthagara to induce the Moon to marry her. But in the post-vedic time of the Brihad devatha, the legend of the Rig-veda about Saranyu was so transformed as to make the woman that was made Savarna to be Saranyu's substitute, of the same form and colour as herself left by her with her husband at the time of her disappearance from him. In the *Ramayana*, gods and men assemble to witness Seetha's ordeal and reunion with Rama ; but, she disappears leaving behind her twin-sons, while her substitute, consisting of the swarna or golden image of her, may be compared with Saranyu's substitute Savarna of the story of the Brihad devatha.

.....In days subsequent to the age of the *Ramayana* strange stories have arisen, one set of them to the effect that Seetha was the sister of Rama, who, in marrying her, married his own sister ; and the other that Seetha was the daughter of Ravana, who in abducting her, abducted his own daughter. About twenty years ago, I heard from Honnali Gururayacharya, an old pensioned Pauranika of the late Maharajah Krishna Raja Udayar of Mysore, the following three stories, to which I add one more which is current in this part of the country, the Mysore State :—

1. Seetha, the incarnation of the Goddess Lakshmi, was the daughter of Dasaratha and sister of Rama. King Janaka obtained her as a gift from Dasaratha, who warned him that she would disappear if allowed to touch the ground. So Janaka always kept her on a raised seat of wood. But, one day, Rishi Jajali came to his palace and as there was no one else to welcome him, she stepped down and forthwith disappeared into the earth. Seven years afterwards she was found in it when Janaka ploughed the ground for his sacrifice. She was not then recognised as the daughter of Dasaratha and Rama married her. —*Uttara Vasishtha purana*; *Skandottara purana*.

2. Ravana was given six crores of years to live by Brahma, who attended on him every day and gave out the astrological aspect of it in connexion with him. Once he had to wait long at the palace gate without being announced. Narada managed to get in anyhow and told Ravana that he had lost three-fourth of his life period by having made Brahma wait at his palace gate; and that what remained will be destroyed if he abducted a damsel who had married her brother. Now Ravana knew not that Seetha was the sister of Rama and carried her away to his ruin.—*Bhargava purana*.

3. Once upon a time Narada and Thumburu, the divine singers, went to Swetha-dweepa to give a concert before Narayana. Thumburu was graciously welcomed and readily admitted, but Narada was coldly left outside. Just then Lakshmi entered the hall in state and her attendants hustled Narada aside to make way for her. His cup of wrath was full and he cursed Lakshmi to be born as the daughter of an Asura. So, she became the child of Ravana and Mandodari. Narada advised Ravana to cast away the child as she was his Fate. Ravana threw her into the sea and the waves washed her into Sruthamala, a river in Janaka's kingdom. The Sun-

god placed her in a lotus there and adored her for nine months. Janaka prayed to the sun for issue and received Seetha from him. So, Ravana abducted his own daughter all unknowingly.—*Maudgalya Ramayana*; *Adb. R.*

4. The Devas were cruelly oppressed by Ravana and began a sacrifice to bring forth an immortal Being that could slay the tyrant. They were to offer a pot of Amritha as an oblation into the fire. Narada told Ravana of it, but represented that the Devas desired to create a venomous being to kill him and meant to offer therefor a pot of the deadliest venom; for he did not want Ravana to become immortal by drinking of the Amritha. Ravana dispersed the Devas, destroyed the sacrifice and brought the vessel of Amritha to Lanka. He left it in the charge of his wife Mandodari, warning her against the Devas who will risk everything to recover it. Some time after, she was so much disgusted with the inconstancy of Ravana that she resolved to do away with herself and quaffed the deadly poison of the Devas. But, lo ! she felt healthier and more cheerful than ever, and gave birth to a beautiful girl, whom, in her fear of being upbraided by her husband, she cast into the sea.—*Adb. R.*

Valmeeki gives us no information about the ultimate origin of Seetha, except that she was found in the sacrificial ground by Janaka. This might have been worked out from the identity of the Seetha of the *Taitt. Brahmana* with the Seetha of the *Ramayana*. Prajapathi or Savitha is the father of Seetha; also of the Moon and of Sraddha whom he loves later on. So, she marries her brother. We have seen that Seetha is made to be the wife of Indra, who is a solar god. According to the Subrahmanya litany Indra is called Ahalya-jara the lover of Ahalya. Another version of the same formula calls him Swasur-jara, the lover of his sister. The solar

god Poosha is also styled Swasur-jara (R. V, VI, 55. 4 and 5). Ambika, the spouse of Rudra, is called his sister (*Taitt-Samhitha*. I. 8, 6, 1) Prajapathi is said to have conceived an illicit love towards his own daughter..... A Vaidic Brahmin of Sringeri, the seat of Sri Sankaracharya's matha in the State of Mysore, paid a visit to me in 1874 or 1875 and recited on the occasion verse 3 of R. V. X. 3 as a blessing. He quoted a Niruktha thereon, which interprets the verse to mean the whole story of the Ramayana in brief. A few years afterwards, a Vaidic Brahmin from a far off Telugu country recited the same verse and the Niruktha on it as a blessing...The verse is in a hymn to Agni and is rendered by Griffith thus:—"Attendant on the blessed dame, the blessed hath come: the lover followeth his sister. Agni far-spreading with conspicuous lustre, hath compassed night with whitely shining garments". The original for night is Rama, for in the Vedas the word Rama as a proper noun is interpreted to mean dark-coloured or black. Sayana explains the verse as follows:—"The blessed is Agni, while the blessed dame is his own light or the Dawn, attended by whom he comes from the Garhapatya to the Ahavaneeya site. Then the same Agni who is Jara in the sense of *Satroonam Farayitha*, the destroyer of his enemies, approaches the same dame, who is *Swasri* either in the sense of one who moves by herself, or of sister to him. Likewise, he stands and shines with his bright light encompassing or overpowering the darkness of night at the time of the evening *Homa* rite ". As the Garhapatya and Ahavaneeya are respectively the western and eastern fires, what Sayana means seems to be this:—Agni, present in the Garhapatya fire at the time of the evening worship, is fancied to go round to the Ahavaneeya fire to receive the morning worship, when he is attended by the Dawn or when he is fancied to have approached her; and

then he goes back to receive the evening worship shining brightly in the Garhapatya fire, as in battling with and conquering the darkness of night.....The only other place where the word Rama occurs in the R.V. is X. 93. 14 where it is certainly used as a proper name of a famous Asura or heroic being. It appears to me that the Niruktha on the above verse, which is against Sayana's interpretation, was composed by taking the Rama of it to mean the Rama of the Ramayana and by reading the epic into it thus :—"The blessed is Rama and the blessed dame is Seetha. Attended by her, he goes first to the hermitage of Bharadwaja and later on to the forest by his father's command. Then, Ravana the unlawful lover of Seetha, whom, as the Mother of the Universe, he should have looked upon as if she were his sister, approaches to abduct her. Then the bridge is thrown across the sea ; Ravana is slain ; Seetha goes through the fire ordeal ; Agni took her up and declared her pure. He stood about Rama shining with brilliant colors." Even if we reject the Niruktha as spurious, the verse itself is worthy of note, in that it praises the Deity thereof as the lover of his sister.

There are four Buddhist stories, all of which have some resemblance to the Ramayana ; in three of them, the princes wed their sisters, while the last, called the Dasaratha Jataka, is a Buddhist version of the story of Rama, who is said to have married his sister Seetha.

1. Brahmadatta, king of Varanasi, exiled his sons Maheemsasaka and Chanda to protect them from the intrigues of their step-mother, to whom he had granted permission to choose anything she might wish. But, her son Soorya refused the kingdom which she chose for him and joined the two brothers in their exile. While wandering in the Himalayan forests, a Rakshasa under the god Veesavana dragged down into a pond Chanda and Soorya,

who did not know Buddha's law ; but the eldest brother Maheemsasaka, who knew the law, procured their release by answering all the questions put by the Rakshasa. On the death of the king the three brothers returned home; the eldest succeeded to the throne, Chanda became the heir-apparent and Soorya the commander.—*Buddhaghosha's Commentary on the Dhammapada.*

2. The Ikshwaku king Ambashtha Raja sent into exile his four sons and five daughters by his first wife to please the second. The young princes lived in the forests and married their sisters to provide a mutual safeguard against the degeneration of their race by unworthy alliances ; and they installed their elder sister Priya as their mother. After a time she is striken with leprosy and removed to another part of the forest. Rama has been compelled to resort to the forests by leprosy but had since recovered. He meets her, cures her and marries her.—*Buddhaghosha's commentary on the Sutra Nipatha.*

3. King Okaku had five consorts named Hastha Chittha, Janthu, Palini and Visakha. By Hastha he had four sons, Okaka-mukho, Karakando, Hatthinako, and Nipuro, and five daughters, Piya, Supia, Ananda, Sananda, Veethasena. On the death of Hastha, the king married a lovely and youthful princess and had by her a son named Janthu, who on the fifth day of his birth was presented to the king. So very delighted was he that he allowed her to choose any boon she liked from him. She chose the crown for her own son. The king fretted and frowned, but was obliged to grant the wish in honour of his word. He exiled the four sons of his first wife with a large army and eight officers of the state, telling his sons to come back on his demise and succeed to the throne. Their five sisters accompanied them voluntarily, followed by great crowds of sympathising people. On the first day,

this multitude marched one yojana, on the second two, on the third three. The princes concluded that it was quite unworthy of them to deprive another Rajah of his territory; so they marched to the frontier of the Himalayas and built a city name Kapilavastu, because the spot was sanctified by its proximity to the hermitage of Kapila, who was no other than the Bodhisatwa himself in a former birth. He left the Brahmin family and assumed a sacerdotal character among the Rishis. On the advise of his counsellors, the princes avoided unequal matrimonial alliances by marrying their four sisters, while the eldest was treated as their mother. Their father was informed of it and broke forth into joyful exclamations to his courtiers. " My friends ! Most assuredly my sons are Sakyas (supremely able)". Gautama Buddha is called Saka as he was born in the line of these four princes.—*Turnour's Introduction to the Mahavamsa.*

4. Dasaratha, king of Varanasi, had two sons Rama-pandita and Lakshmana and a daughter Seethadevi. After the death of their mother, the king married a second wife who begot a son named Bharata. She instigated the king to exile the elder princes for twelve years and Seetha went with them to the Himalayas of her own accord. Lakshmana and Seetha treated Rama as their father and brought him herbs and fruits. The astrologers had told Dasaratha that he would die precisely in twelve years ; but he died in his ninth year. Bharata refused to be installed as king and went to the forest to bring Rama back. Lakshmana and Seetha wept bitterly on hearing of their father's death, but Rama was all unmoved. He consoled Bharata and refused to return until the three remaining years were over. Bharata, Lakshmana and Seetha were sent back, taking with them Rama's shoes made of grass which the ministers placed on the throne. Whenever they committed an act of injustice, the shoes struck each other

sharply. At the end of the three years Rama returned to Varanasi and was crowned as king with Seetha as his consort. He reigned for sixteen thousand years and went to heaven.—*Dasaratha Jataka*.

Professor Lassen accounts as follows for the absence of the abduction of Seetha and the war of the Rakshasas. It was necessary to identify Rama of the *Dasaratha Jataka* with Gautama Buddha in all his previous births; the popular story of Rama is changed to suit the mild character of Buddha, who, though a Kshatriya, never waged war, but gave up the world and became a pious sage. The Rama of the *Jataka* is a vegetarian, living on roots and herbs, and is such a rigid sage as not to grieve for the death of his own father. But the Rama of the *Ramayana* has the greatest affection for his father, weeps like a child on hearing of his death, and performs Sraddha to him, according to the ancient Aryan custom, with the flesh of *ena*, a kind of black antelope; and he is described as subsisting not only upon roots and herbs in his exile, but also upon the flesh of game killed in the jungle. The extremely mild character of Buddhism is clearly shadowed forth in story No. 3, in which it is said that a new city was built in the wilderness to prevent the infliction of pain involved in subduing other kings and appropriating their territory. Such an ideal can never view war with favour. The Lanka war in the south having thus had to be avoided, the exiled Rama is stated to have gone to the Himalayan jungles in the north, to which the exiled Pandavas of the other great epic, the *Mahabharata*, go.

Mr. J. D. Mayne, in his *Hindu Law and Usage* 5th Ed. p. 92, refers to the custom in ancient times of the incestuous marriages of Sakya princes with their sisters. Buddha himself is called Sakya-simha, and it is probable that Buddhism absorbed a large number of the Sakyas who founded their own dynasty, and that in these Buddhist

legends about princes marrying their own sisters the custom of the Sakya princes is reflected. These legends must have arisen long after the rise of Buddhism. Our ancient Dharma-sootras, some of which are adjudged by competent scholars to be much anterior to Buddhism, and the marriage and other customs recorded in which must have come down from more ancient time, are unanimous in placing the bride entirely beyond the bride-groom's blood relations. The Rig-Veda itself, our most ancient record, clearly condemns sister-marriage when it says in X. 10, 12 "*Papam ahur yat savasaram nigacchet*'--they have called it sin that a brother should marry his sister"; and we have seen that what is said in the Rig-Veda about the Sun Pushan's or Agni's loving his own sister is a riddle.

Maheemsasaka of story No. 1 means 'the ruler of the earth', and Chanda and Soorya are the Pali or Prakrit words or Chandra and Soorya, the Moon and the Sun. That story extols the merit of the knower of the Dharma or law of Buddha. The pond mentioned evidently signifies the fancied abyss into which the Sun and Moon sink and disappear when setting; but when they rise from it in the east, it is said by the devout Buddhist that they do so only by the merit of the knower of the Law, who alone deserves to be 'the ruler of the earth.' This may be compared with the *Taitt-Aranyaka* II. 1. 2, which says that if one duly performs the Sandhya worship and throws up the water taken in his palms by repeating the Gayatri verse, the water thus thrown up becomes the Vajra weapon and cuts off the Rakshasas that molest the Sun. Likewise, the Rakshasa-prasna or questioning by the Rakshasa may be compared with the Yaksha-prasna incident at the concluding part of the Aranyakaparvam of the *M. B.*

The idea of the Buddhist story, No. 2. that Rama was a leper is very peculiar. According to Dr. Macdonell's

dictionary, the word Rama means "dark-coloured, black ; pleasing, delightful, charming, lovely ". It seems to be derived from *ram*, to rejoice at, delight in, enjoy, love etc. Rama, in the feminine, means a charming young woman.

Now, according to Apte's dictionary, Rama among other things means not only black, but white, and also Kushtham, leprosy, which is of two kinds, black and white. It is, I think, by catching hold of this leprosy sense of the word that the Buddhist story in question has made Rama a leper. Evidently that story leaves it to be understood that this leper Rama came to know the Buddhist law, cured himself by its merit, and became Rama in the sense of one who is charming; beautiful, and also the lover, wedding Priya, the ' dear ' lady. Thus the lesson taught by this story is that by knowing the Law, even a leper cures himself and others of leprosy—moral leprosy.—*Essay on Indo-Aryan Mythlogy*, by Narayana Aiyangar, Part II, p. 394—476.

192. 16 *Drew* :—How could Rama, a mere boy, reach up and bend the huge bow ?

His divine touch brought down the tough staff within his reach ; he pressed one end of it with his toe, when it sprung up straight and gracefully bent itself. Rama strung it.—*Go*.

22. *None* :—The moment after Rama broke the bow of Siva, the expectant Seetha came forward and threw a garland of flowers round his neck.—*Adhy. R. I.*

30. *Brighter glory* :—" There is nothing in all the worlds that comes within the range of my desire ; hence my wealth is illimitable. If Mithila my capital is on fire, my heart does not beat the faster for it." So said Janaka, the man of dispassion. And he was an ornament to the house of Nimi.

196. 4. *Markandeya* :—

Brahma

Bhrigu = *Khyathi*

Dhatha = *Ayathi*

Mrikandu

Markandeya (*Bh.* IV. 1).

In a former kalpa, there was a son born to Bhrigu, by name Mrikandu. When he had travelled far along the vale of years, a son was born to him. When the boy was five years of age, a great Yogi happened to visit the hermitage. Mrikandu honoured him highly, and said "Holy sir ! I hope my boy will live long and happily." "Alas"! replied the sage "not very long ; six months hence he will quit this body." Mrikandu was grieved beyond measure and hastened to perform over him the rite of initiation. Five months and twenty-five days passed away, when one morning, the boy met the seven Rishis during his wanderings in the forest. He saluted them with all reverence and they held their hands up in blessing over him. "May you live long" rose in one chorus from their lips. But, all at once they recollect that the boy before them was short-lived and were at a loss to extricate themselves from the self-created difficulty. So they took him to the hall of Brahma. The boy saluted Brahma and he blessed him with the usual formula "May you live long." Next, he turned to the Rishis and said "What brought you here ?" "We are in a nice fix" replied they "this boy has but five days more to live. We have pronounced over him all unconsciously the same blessing as yourself. Now, it is not good that our word should be set at naught; find us a way out of the difficulty." "Then," said Brahma "this

Markandeya will enjoy the same length of years as myself. He will stand in the forefront of the Rishis and will be of material help to me."—*Padmapurana, Srishtikhanda.* 28.

The Pandavas asked Markandeya " Holy sir ! Know you of any one who has seen a longer life than yourself?" "Yes" replied the sage "Indradyumna, the royal sage, lived in the world of the gods for countless ages and was dismissed to the earth when his merit waned. He came to me and said ' Do you know me?' ' Nay' replied I, we are so busy with the due observance of our daily duties ; we are not men of pleasure and do not stay more than a night at a place ? ' Then' asked he ' know you of any one longer lived than yourself ? ' ' Yes' I replied ' there is an owl by name Pravarakarna in the Himalayas. May be he knows you.' He transformed himself in to a horse and bore me to where the owl lived. ' Do you know me?' asked the king of the night bird. ' I know not' it replied. ' Then' asked the king 'know you of any one longer lived than yourself?' ' Yes' it replied 'there lives in the lake Indradyumna a crane by name Nalijangha. May be he knows you.' Then the king conveyed myself and the owl to where the crane was. 'Do you happen to know' asked we 'this king Indradyumna?' It meditated for a while and replied 'No I know not' 'Then' we asked ' know you of any one longer lived than yourself ? ', Yes' it replied 'there lives in the depths of this lake a tortoise Akoopara by name. Let us ask him.' Then it called out 'Friend Akoopara ! Come out please. We desire a certain information from you.' Very soon the tortoise rose to the surface and came to where we were. 'Do you happen to remember' we asked of it 'this king Indradyumna?' It thought for a while and burst into tears ; then it clasped its hands and in faltering tones exclaimed 'Know I not this mighty king.? Here have I seen him perform countless sacrifices, each one grander than

the preceding. This lake was dug by the hoofs of the cattle given away by this generous king on such occasions. And here I have been living ever since.'

All at once we saw a bright aerial car coming down towards us from the god-world and an invisible voice exclaimed 'Indradyumna ! righteous king ! come back to your bright abode among us. Your fame is still fresh on earth. So long as a man is remembered on earth for his good or evil deeds, he dwells in the bright worlds above or in the dark hells below. So, it behoves men to eschew evil and follow the right.' 'Stay awhile' said the king 'let me take back these old friends of mine to where they were.' Accordingly he bore myself and Pravarakarna the owl, to our respective abodes and ascended the vehicle that was waiting to receive him.—*M. B. Vanaparva* 202.

The current tradition in Southern India is as follows:—

The boy came to know from his parents that he had only sixteen years to live on earth and made a round of pilgrimages to the holy shrines of Siva. On the last day, Yama came upon him when he was offering worship to Mahadeva at Tirukkadaiyur. Markandeya threw his arms round the Linga ; but the god of Death cast his fatal noose over the boy and the Linga that dared to brave him, and pulled with all his might, when, lo ! from the image of the dread god sprang Rudra in all his terrors. He let his foot fly at Yama, who sank down all in a heap, bereft of his senses. Then Siva turned towards Markandeya, soothed him with gentle words and blessed him with length of years past count. So, "ever sweet sixteen even as Markandeya" has passed into a proverb.

"Great Rishi !" exclaimed Yudishtira "you have seen thousands and thousands of Yugas. There is none now on earth as long-lived as you are except the Ancient of Days, Brahma. When this universe is empty of life, of gods, of

Asuras, when the Great Pralaya sets, you alone offer adoration to Brahma. When, at the end of the Pralaya, the Divine Architect wakes from his yogic sleep to evolve the Universe anew, you alone stand by to witness it. The waters are distributed over the worlds and the mighty air-currents begin to blow over the quarters. Then the sweat-born, the egg-born, the womb-born and the fission-born creatures begin to people the worlds. In deep samadhi you have approached and worshipped Brahma, the great Demiurge. Dawns of Creation past count have you seen with these eyes. Your stern austerities have made you the envy of Gods and Danavas. You are ever regarded as standing next to Narayana. Adorned with the gems of dispassion and undeterred will, you have seen your heart-lotus blossom many a time and you have adored the Lord of Lords on its pericarp. Old age and Death flee from you as the favored one of Brahma. When there is nor sun, nor fire, nor air, nor moon, nor earth, nor the heavens; when the whole creation animate and inanimate have become nought; when the mighty Waters alone remain illimitable, unfathomable and dark; when the Gods, the Asuras, the Siddhas, the Uragas cease to be; when the Lord of the Universe sinks down into yogic sleep during the Pralayic night, then, you alone live to offer devout worship amidst that waste of waters and desolation. In your consciousness are embodied the histories of past kalpas, of past universes, of past humanities, Gods, Asuras, Nagas and Siddhas"—*M. B. Vanaparva.* 191.

He observed the vow of perpetual celibacy, and meditated upon the Lord for ten thousand years as manifested through fire, the sun, the guru, the Brahmana and the heart ; and in consequence triumphed over death. Six Manvantaras of this Kalpa passed away thus and the seventh saw him ever engaged in profound meditation and

austerities. Indra grew mightily afraid of him, attributing to him ambitious ideas of coveting his heavenly seat. Accordingly he sent his Apsarasas with the God of Love at their head to beguile the sage from his holy pursuits. But, his spiritual radiance blinded them and they returned sadder and wiser. Then Mahavishnu came down to where he was, in the guise of the Rishis Nara and Narayana. Markandeya was overwhelmed with joy and offered them reverent worship and sang their glories in no measured terms. "What can we do for you ? said they. " But this " replied Markandeya " I see the very gods under the mighty sway of your Maya. I wish to witness and test its work and power." " You will have your wish" said they and went back to their holy hermitage at Badari. Markandeya resumed his meditations. One day he was at the banks of the river Pushpabhadra, offering evening prayers ; there arose mighty winds followed by huge clouds of inky blackness, from which darted tongues of lambent flame ; the windows of the heavens seemed to have opened and rain fell therefrom in drops huge as the axle of great cars. The oceans rose in tumultuous uproar, and covered the face of the globe, rising higher and higher. The winds, the rains and the waves overwhelmed the earth, the middle world and the heavens ; and the Waters of Deluge engulfed the three worlds. Then Markandeya wandered like one blind and demented, all alone in that waste of waters, tossed by the winds and waves, groping helplessly in that utter darkness, caught in the fearful eddies that seemed to pierce to the very depths of the universe. The frightful inhabitants of the deep fought with one another for him. Then, he found himself near a young banyan tree, lovely with flowers, fruits and shoots. One of its branches was unusually long and on it was a babe reclining on a leaf of it. Supernal lustre radiated from it ; it was a vision of beauty that playfully put its big toe

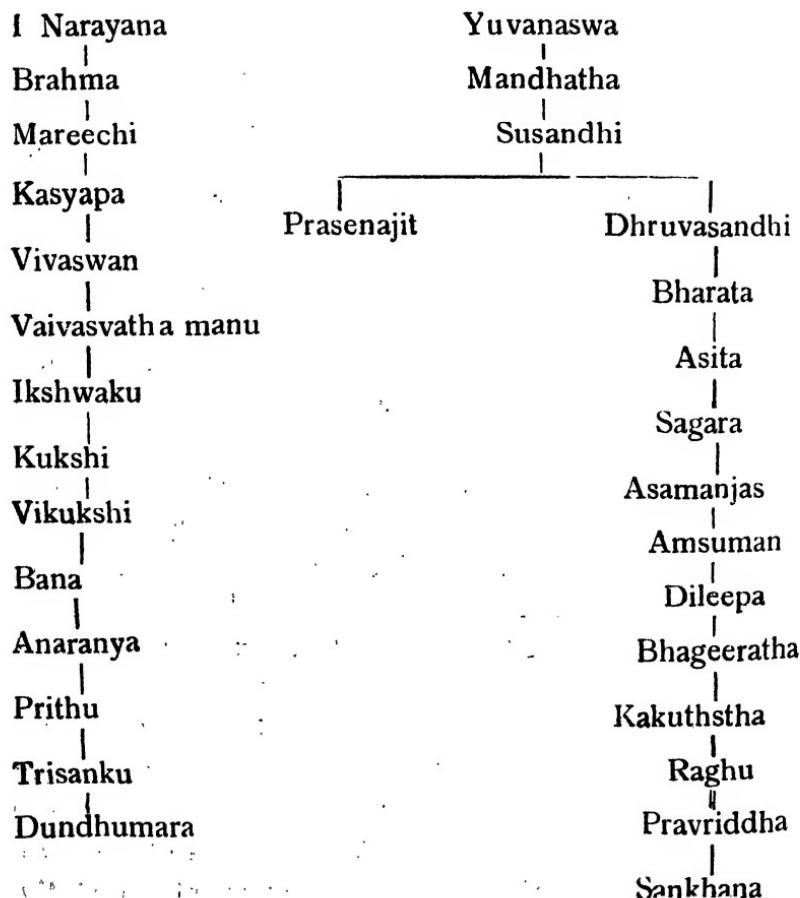
into its mouth and sucked at it. Markandeya was filled with a sense of love and awe at the sight of the babe. He drew near it to inquire its whereabouts, but was irresistably drawn into its stomach by its powerful breath. There he found the countless worlds and systems that make up the universe, with mountains, oceans, islands, countries, rivers, forests, towns, hamlets, fields, deserts, gods, elementals, men, animals, time, duration, law, duty, virtue, vice, wisdom and ignorance. There were the Himalayas and his hermitage therein with the river Pushpabhadra flowing hard by. And he wandered therein for countless ages, but could not come upon the limits of that wonderful manifestation. All at once the breath of the child expelled him with mighty force and there was again the banyan tree and the babe reclining on a leaf of it, with its laughing eyes bent curiously upon the bewildered sage. And he was further bewildered when he saw the babe in his heart. Markandeya sprang forward to clasp it in an excess of delight; but there was only empty pace before him, neither child, nor the tree, nor the waters. Markandeya then realised that it was all the Maya of the Lord that was promised him. And he resumed his round of duties.

Long after, Mahadeva and Parvati came to visit him and were reverently worshipped by the sage. "You have" said they "won our grace and in consequence, are entitled to a boon from us; for, you have seen truly into the mystery of the *Three in One* and the *One in Three*." "Honoured am I above all others" replied the sage "but, what shall I ask of you as if I have not been able to realize my desires to the utmost even before this ? Yet, since it is your command that I should ask something of you, may my heart be unswervingly centred at the feet of the Lord of Mercy and those that find favour in his eyes". "Be it so" said Mahadeva "even as you would have it. You are Lord over Death. Your eye of wisdom shall range unlimited over the past, the

present and the future, and you shall, during succeeding ages, be the teacher of wisdom."—*Bh* XII. 9. 10 ; *M. B.* *Vana-parva*. 191 & 192.

198. 33. *Unmanifested* :—What is it? "From the Akasa arose Brahman." (V. R. II. 110). What is that Akasa? "In the beginning there was Water every where and you reclined on it, plunged in yogic sleep, containing in yourself the countless worlds and systems. From your navel arose a golden lotus and from it I came. You made me the lord of creatures."—*V. R.* VII. 110)

200. 9 *Dasaratha*.—



Sudarsana	Barhanasva	Amsuman
Agnivarna	Krithasva	Dileepa
Seeghraga	Syenajit	Bhageeratha
Maru	Yuvanasva	Srutha
Prausruka	Mandhatha	Nabha
Ambareesha	(Trasadasyu)	Sindhudweepa
Nahusha	Purukuthsa	Ayutayus
Yayathi	Trasadasyu	Rithuparna
Nabhaga	Anaranya	Sudasa
Aja	Haryasva	(Kalmashapada)
Dasaratha	Aruna	Asmaka
(V. R. I. 70)	Tribandhana	Moolaka
II. Vikushi	Satyavrata	(Nareekavacha)
Kakutstha	(Trisanku)	Dasaratha
(Puranjaya)	Harischandra	Aidabida
Anenas	Rohitha	Visvasaha
Visvasandhi	Hareetha	Khatwanga
Chandra	Charmpa	Deerghabahu
Yuvanasva	Sudeva	Dileepa
Sabastha	Vijaya	Raghu
Brihadasva	Bharuka	Aja
Kuvalayasva (Dun-	Vrika	Dasaratha
dhumara)	Bahuka	(A. R. I.)
Dridhasva	Sagara	
Haryasva	Asamanjas	
Nikumbha		

Bh. IX. 9 varies from the above thus :—

1. Prithu comes between Anenas and Visvasandhi
2. Sabastha built the town of Sabasti.
3. Champa was the founder of the city Champa.
4. Rithuparna was the friend of Nala.
5. Dileepa comes between Deerghabahu and Raghu.

I *Drishta*. Brother of Ikshwaku. His descendants were born Kshatriyas, but raised themselves to the status of Brahmanas.

II *Narishyantha*:—Another brother of Ikshwaku. In his line was born the Rishi Agnivesya, an incarnation of Agni ; from him sprang the Agnivesa Gothra of Brahmanas.

III *Prishadra* : While he was studying with his guru Vasishtha, he was entrusted with the care of the cattle. During nights he kept awake, sword in hand, true to his duty. It was raining heavily and a tiger chanced to stray into the fold. The cattle broke loose and fled in terror, when the tiger made away with one of them. It was pitch dark and Prishadra was made aware of the loss only when he heard the frightened cry of the cow. He chased after it, and fiercely attacked the tiger. But, in the confusion of darkness, he chanced to kill the cow instead, and the tiger escaped with the loss of an ear. He reported the incident to Vasishtha who said, "It is a great sin, but done unawares ; however the karma of your past birth will come upon you and degrade you to the level of a Soodra." Prishadra accepted it gladly and thereafter led the life of a hermit, his heart ever centred on the Brahman. One day he saw a forest conflagration and knowing that his time was come left his body in it and reached the Fountain of Mercy.

IV. Ikshvaku

...
Nabhaga
|
Nabhaga
|
Ambareesha
(Bh. IX. 4 to 6)

Ikshvaku

...
Yuvanasva
|
Mandhatha
|
Ambareesha
(Bh. IX. 6 to 13).

IV. Nabhaga :—He remained so long with his guru that his brothers concluded he had taken the vow of celibacy and reserved no share for him of the ancestral property. After a long time he came back to them and asked to be given his share of the patrimony. The brothers pointed out his father to him as his share. Nabhaga asked his parent “ How is it my brothers have set you apart as my share ? ” “ Believe them not ” replied his father “ they have deceived you. A father is not one of the ancestral goods and can never be the share of any one. Now, I will show you a means whereby you can be richer than they. Some Rishis of the line of Angiras have begun a twelve days’ sacrifice, but have stopped it on the sixth day, ignorant of the Vaisvadeva sookthas to be recited on the occasion. Go to them and set them right. When they go to swarga after the completion of sacrifice, they will make over to you what remains of the immense wealth collected for the purpose.” Nabhaga followed his father’s advice and was left in possession of untold riches, when a swarthy man came to him from the north and said, “ Now, this wealth is mine.” “ Nay ” argued Nabhaga “ the holy sages have given it to me.” “ Well ” said the stranger “ I abide by your father’s decision in this affair.” Nabhaga did so and the old man replied “ Yes ; to Rudra belongs the remnants of sacrifices.” Nabhaga returned to his visitor and said “ My father has adjudged that to you belongs by right this wealth. Please take it and forgive me for my ignorance of your lawful claim.” “ I am highly pleased with you and with your father ” said Rudra “ you have stood the test and spoken the truth. This wealth is yours since you want it and I will instruct you in supreme wisdom.”

Nabhaga is one of the seven Rishis in the tenth Manvantara.

V. *Ambareesha* :—He was a great devotee of Vishnu, so much so that the God placed with him his weapon Chakra to protect him from danger. Once Ambareesha and his wife undertook to observe the Dvadasi vow for a year. He fasted on the eleventh day of the fortnight and broke the fast the next morning. On one occasion he fasted for three whole days ; and on the twelfth day, bathed in the holy waters of the Yamuna, offered worship to Vishnu at the shrine of Mathura and gave away untold riches and countless cattle to the Brahamanas. He then fed them sumptuously and was given permission by them to break his fast. Rishi Durvasas came to him then and was respectfully invited to dine with him. The sage agreed and went to the Yamuna to take his bath and perform his ablutions. The king waited for him ever so long, but he came not. The sacred Dvadasi or the twelfth day was rapidly nearing its end. If Ambareesha dined he would have violated the laws of hospitality to a Brahmana ; if he fasted, he would have failed in the observance of the Dvadasi vow. He solved the difficulty by sipping a little water, which the rules lay down as equivalent to eating and fasting. Just then came Durvasas and his rage knew no bounds. He tore out one of his matted looks and turned it into a dread Being. “Kill Ambareesha ;” cried he “consume him to ashes”. But the Chakra of Vishnu that was hard by, ready to protect him, showed itself and annihilated the demon; next it turned against Durvasas and chased him merrily even to the uttermost limits of the Brahmanda. He appealed for protection to every one, Brahma, Rudra and the rest ; but, one and all they declared that it was simply preposterous to ask them to protect him who had dared to offend a devotee of Vishnu. At last, he fled to where Vishnu was, even to Vai-kuntha ; rushing into the hall where sat the Lord with his spouse, he threw himself at His feet and cried, “Foun-

tain of mercy! Save me. I am in despair and have tried every other means. I have had the grievous misfortune to offend one of your devotees and I abide by any penance that you may order me to go through in expiation. I have been blessed with a sight of you and it is simply unthinkable that and grief fear, sin and sorrow should be coupled with my name". "Nay" said the Lord "I can do nothing in this affair. I and those under me are but obedient servants to those that honour me with their devotion. We do not mind in the least any offence or harm that might be done us. But we are ever on the watch to find out and punish any one that dares to harm our devotees. So, as a friend, my sincerest advice to you is to go back to Ambareesha and throw yourself upon his mercy." Durvasas did so ; the king was mightily ashamed of it that the Holy One should have been reduced to the undignified position of having to make a request of him, He prayed to Vishnu and to his Chakra to relieve Durvasas of his fear and danger. Durvasas could not praise him enough. "Prince of devotees !" said he "you interceded to save my life who tried to take yours. I see nothing is impossible to one who has bound the Lord in chains of devotion"—*Lingapurana* II. 5 ; *Bh.* IX 4 to 6.

VI. *Kavi*, another brother of Ikshvaku, retired from the world even when he was a youth and devoted himself to a life of contemplation, observing the vow of celibacy.

VII. One day Ikshvaku sent his son Vikukshi to bring him meat from the forest to offer in an Ashtaka Sraddha he was performing. On his way back Vikukshi could not overcome the pangs of hunger and ate of a hare out of the lot. Vasishtha, the priest, knew it and rejected the flesh. Ikshvaku was incensed at it and drove his son out of the

kingdom. He was thereafter known as Sasada (hare-eater).

VIII. His son *Puranjaya* was entreated by the gods to help them against the Asuras. "Willingly" replied he "if your Indra would bear me during the battle." And so did Indra in the shape of a bull. Hence he was known as Indra-vahana (Indra-vehicled) or Kakutstha.

IX. *Dundhumara*:—Rishi Uthanka meditated long and earnestly upon the Lord who appeared to him and said "My dear ! What can I do for you ?" "Lord" replied Uthanka "May my heart ever be centred on thy feet." "Be it so" said Vishnu "I have destroyed the Daityas Madhu and Kaitabha; but Dundhu, their son, lives on and works destruction upon the worlds. I will infuse Kuvalayasva of the line of Ikshvaku, with my energy, whereby the wicked one shall be destroyed; and you will induce him to do it and confer an obligation upon gods and men."

Brihadasva, of the solar line, placed his kingdom in the charge of his son Kuvalayasva and retired to the forests when Uthanka met him on the way and said "Hard by my hermitage there extends a shoal of sand several leagues in extent. Dundhu, the son of Madhu Kaitabha, lies hidden therein and observes stern austerities to destroy the worlds. Slay him before you retire from the world. He has obtained from Brahma a boon of invulnerability from Devas, Daityas, Nagas, Gandharvas, Yakshas and Rakshasas. Once a year he breathes out and the earth, the mountains, the rivers and the forests quake in affright for seven days. A cloud of dust rises aloft and hides the sun's bright car. Dense smoke, fierce flames, and burning cinders are scattered far and wide and worry me much. I believe that you are chosen to rid the earth of this mighty evil doer. The

energy of Vishnu will be infused into you for that purpose. The Lord has granted me a boon long ago that His might will overshadow him who will destroy this Daitya." "Nay" replied the king. "I have renounced the world and its concerns, peaceful or warlike. There is my son Kuvalayasva to whom such work comes natural and easy;" and he laid his commands upon the King to that effect and departed to the forests. Then, the champion proceeded with Uthanka and twenty-one thousand of his own sons to where Dundhu lay hid beneath the sandy waste and caused it to be dug up; whereupon they saw the Daitya fast asleep, resplendent as the sun. The young men attacked him on all sides ; he awoke and let forth a stream of fire from his mouth which consumed them to ashes. Kuvalayasva, with the might of Vishnu upon him, sent out from his body a current of water which quenched the flames; and the Daitya was destroyed by the Brahmastra launched by the avenger. The gods named him Dundhumara, showered upon him flowers of heavenly fragrance and said " Choose what boons you will have." "Then" said he " may I give away to the Brahmanas whatever they should desire; may I triumph over my enemies; may my heart be ever full of sympathy towards all beings ; may I live in heaven for ever and may I find favour in the eyes of the Lord." "We grant you your wish" replied they "even to the utmost."—*M. B. Vanaparva 204-208.*

X. *Mandhatha* is the seer of Rig Veda I. 112; X. 134. One day Yuvanasva was hunting in the forest, when his horses grew faint with exhaustion and a dreadful thirst consumed him. He saw a smoke issuing from afar and traced it to a spot where some sages were conducting a sacrifice. Overcome with thirst, he drank off from a vessel that lay near, which unfortunately happened to be

full of clarified butter strongly impregnated with powerful mantras. Wonderful to behold, the king conceived; the Aswins the physicians of the gods, skilfully extracted the child from his body. The beautiful babe lay on its father's lap and the gods said "Who will nourish it?" Indra put forth his fingers and exclaimed "I will nourish it," Sweet milk, even as the Amrita, streamed from the finger-tips. The gods named the child Mandhatha. In twelve days, it grew to the height of twelve cubits. Endowed with superhuman strength, vigor and might, he brought the whole earth under his sway in a single day. Janamejaya, Sutha, Gaya, Suna, Brihattara, Asita, Nriga and many others acknowledged his suzerainty, He ruled over the kingdoms between the mountains of the Rising and the Setting sun. Hundreds of Asvamedhas and Rajasooyas did he perform, on which occasion he gave away to the Brahmanas numerous golden Rohitas (fish) ten yojanas long and one broad. Rishis and Brahmanas, Devas and Asuras, Yakshas and Gandharvas were immensely pleased with his gifts of mountains of food and lakes and rivers of milk, curds, honey, clarified butter and sweet drinks.—*M. B. Dronaparva* 62.

Yuvanasva's heart was heavy with the grief of a barren life and the Rishis performed a sacrifice that the king might be blessed with a son. One night they left a vessel of the Vasateevari water powerfully magnetised on the altar and slept the sleep of exhaustion. At midnight Yuvanasva awoke; he was consumed with thirst and looked round for something to allay it. His eyes fell upon the jar of water, cool and refreshing, whereof he drank heartily and fell asleep. Soon after, the Rishis resumed their duties and finding the water vessel empty exclaimed "Who has drunk of this? If it is the queen she would bring forth a mighty son." Then great fear took hold

of Yuvanasva and he tremblingly said to them "Holy Ones! It was I that did it and by mistake." At once he became pregnant and in due time the babe burst out of his side ; but Yuvanasva survived it. He married Indumati and begat Purukuthsa, Ambareesha and Muchukunda and fifty daughters whom Rishi Sowbhari married.—*V. P. IV. 2 M. B. Santiparva 28 ; Vanaparva. 127.*

He has a seat in the hall of Yama. *M. B. Sabhaparva 8.*

He met his death at the hands of Lavanasura, the son of Madhu.—*V. R. VII. 67.*

XI. *Muchukunda* : the son of Mandhatha gained a victory for the Devas over the Asuras. "What would you have of us," asked they, overcome with gratitude. "I desire to sleep and that soundly and long." "Have your wish" replied they "and may he who ventures to disturb you, be consumed by a fire that would issue from your body." Muchukunda retired into a far-away cave and slept long and soundly. Long after, when the Dwapara Yuga was drawing to its end, the Lord came down on earth as Sree Krishna. Once Kalayavana, the Mlechha king, attacked him and Krishna feigned a retreat and gradually drew his enemy to a cave into which he vanished suddenly. Kalayavana followed him into it and came upon some one sleeping in the dark. "You rogue, Krishna!" cried he "so, this is your little trick to escape from me by feigning sleep?" And gave him a mighty kick on his ribs. Muchukunda, thus rudely awaked from his long sleep, turned fierce eyes upon the daring intruder. As foretold by the gods, flames issued from his body and reduced the Yavana to a heap of ashes. Then Krishna appeared to him in his divine form and instructed him in supreme wisdom. Muchukunda remembered the prophecy of Rishi Garga that the Lord would come down on the earth in the twenty-eighth Dvaparayuga. He recognised Krishna to be the same and

craved no other boon at his hands than eternal devotion to him. "Truly" said Krishna "thy mind is pure and noble, for it is not tempted by boons. Those that are wholly devoted to me do not yield to desires. Those that are not devoted may control their mind by Pranayama and other practices ; but, as their desires are not overcome, they are bound to go astray. Roam about the earth, with thy mind fixed on me. Thy devotion shall never fail. Wash away the impurities of the present life with devoted concentration of the mind. In thy next birth thou shalt be born as a Brahmana and become the greatest friend of all beings, and thou shalt then come unto me."

Muchukunda came out of the mountain cave. He found that the animals and trees were all puny and inferred it was Kaliyuga. He made his way to the north and engaged himself in devotional practices in the Badari Asrama of Nara and Narayana.—*Bh. X 51.*

XII. *Anaranya*: He was killed by Ravana—*V.R.VII.19.*
 XII. *Asita*. King Bahu was defeated by his enemies the Haihayas and the Talajanghas and driven out of his kingdom. He retired to the forests and lived there a life of peace. One day he was on his way to fetch water and sank down from age and exhaustion. His wife Yadavi was about to quit her body and follow her lord even to the other world, when Rishi Aurva, who lived hard by, made her abandon her purpose ; "for" said he "you are big with child and ought not to make away with yourself." He took her to his hermitage and there she gave birth to a son ; but her co-wife had secretly poisoned her when she was pregnant; hence the boy was named Sagara (with poison) and took seven years to come out of his mother's womb. Aurva performed for him the necessary sacraments, instructed him in all the arts of war and peace ; he got for him from Parasurama the asthra of Agni. Sagara destroyed his enemies

and those that escaped took refuge with Rishi Vasishtha. At his command Sagara pardoned them, but cast them out of his kingdom. They were deprived of the right of exercising the duties of their order and were ever after recognized by the particular way they wore their hair and beard. From them were derived the Mlechhas of the East and the West.

Asamanjas, Sukethu, Dharmaratha and Panchavana were all that remained to Sagara of his numerous sons after the wrath of Kapila reduced them to ashes. The ruler of the ocean brought the sacrificial horse back to Sagara and was thereafter called Sagara.—*Vayu Purana* 86-88.

XIV. *Saudasa*. Numerous hymns of the Rig Veda sing his praise, his wealth, his prowess, his devotion and his wisdom. Visvamitra and Vasishtha strove hard to secure him as their disciple.

XV. *Saudasa*:—One day he was hunting in the forest, when the curse of Vasishtha induced him to spring upon a Brahmana that was disporting himself with his wife. The chaste lady prayed hard to the cannibal, but was obliged to witness her husband being torn to pieces by the animalised king. Then she cursed him in her wrath “You shall be barren of children ; your head shall shiver into fragments the moment you touch your wife ” and she threw herself into the fire. For twelve years did Saudasa led that horrible life and many fell victims to his animal fury. At last the curse fell away from him and he returned to his kingdom. His wife Madayanti gave him to understand the curse that darkened his life and kept him away from her. Saudasa patiently bore the visitation through long years until his guru Vasishtha blessed Madayanti with a son Asmaka. It was then that Parasurama was exterminating the Kshatriya race. The royal ladies kept the boy naked in their midst and the avenger was not able to come at him ; hence his name

Nareekavacha, (Woman—armoured). As the Kshatriya race sprang from him anew, he was also named Moolaka (the root).—*Bh.*, IX 6-13 ; *Vayupurana*. 86-88.

XVI. *Nahusha and Yayati*:—Distinct from those of the Lunar race of the same name.

XVII. *Aja*:—His contemporary was Pratheepa of the line of Karthaveerya who ruled over the country of Anoopa. He was a votary of the God of fire and in consequence grew big with pride and insulted Parasurama. The king of Nagapura was invincible through his tapas; Ravana was in great dread of him and before he went to war with Indra, made friends with him as he knew that his kingdom at Janasthana was at his mercy. Aja won the hand of Indumati in a big Swayamvara. She was in her former birth an Apsaras named Harini. Indra sent her to ruin the tapas of Trinabindu the Rajarishi, failing in which, she was cursed to be born on earth. But Indra relented and softened his curse. “ When you behold a garland made of the flowers of this heaven-world, your curse shall fall away from you and you will come back to us”. One day Narada returned from the holy shrine of Gokarna where he had been to offer his worship to Vishnu and on his way, a garland of heavenly flowers fell from his Veena on earth. And as Fates would have it, Indumati was walking in her pleasure-garden at the time. The garland barely brushed her delicate form ; and she caught at the opportunity to quit her body and go back to the world of the gods—*Raghu Vamsa*.

XVIII. *Khatvanga*.—He helped the gods to gain a great victory over the Asuras. “ Choose what you will have of us” said they in the height of their gratitude. “ How much remains of my life ?” asked he. “ An hour and a half ” replied his friends. Then Khatvanga came down to the world of mortals and withdrew himself into deep Samadhi. “ If it is true ” said he “ that I put not my life before the welfare of the

Brahmanas ; if it is true that I look upon the gods, the mortals, the animals and all creation as but the eternal Brahman, may I attain to the feet of the Almighty whom the great sages meditate upon in the Akasa of their hearts ". He was accordingly taken by the Lord unto Him.

Rithuparna was the son of Ayuthayus. He was an adept in the art of gambling known as Akshahridaya (the art of dice).—*Vayupurana* 86-88.

200-23. *Nimi* :—

Nimi	Maru
Janaka	Pratindhaka
Udavasu	Kritaratha
Nandivardhana	Devameedha
Suketu	Vidhrita
Devarata	Mahadhriti
Brihadratha	Keerthiratha
Mahavirya	Maharoman
Sudhriti	Svarnaroman
Dhrishtaketu	Hrasvaroman
Haryasva	Siradhwaja (Janaka)
Maru	Seetha = Rama.

Bh. IX. 6—13

(*vide V. R. I. note 7. Vasishtha* ; *Ib. VII. 55—57; Bh. IX. 6—13*).

201. 34. *Uttara-phalguni* :—The Pitrис, the Aditya Aryama and the Aditya Bhaga are respectively the ruling gods of the constellations Magha, Uttara-phalguni and Poorvaphalguni.—*Taittireeya Brahmana*.

202. I :—*Godana* :—A ceremony performed by anointing a part of the head of a youth of sixteen or eighteen years when he has attained the age of puberty and shortly before marriage ; it is also called *Kesanta* as the Brahmancharin, whose hair has been allowed to grow long, cuts it off finally, the Brahmanas at sixteen years of age, the Kshatriyas at twenty-two and the Vaisyas at twenty-four. As numerous kine are given away to the Brahmanas on the occasion, it is also aptly named *Godana*. (*Go* the hairs of the body and also kine, *Dana* cutting, as also giving away). It resembles the ceremony of Chaula and is performed in the fourteenth year. The boy is not seated in the lap; only the hair on the face is removed ; he takes his bath and sits in meditation on the Supreme until sunset. Then he goes to his guru and says 'I offer you a boon to choose' and gives him two cows"—*Asvalayana Grihya Soothra Karika*.

27. *On the same day* :—Q. Astrological experts lay down that not more than one auspicious ceremony could be performed in a house at a time, else ruin shall seize him.

A.—But others hold that brothers could be married in the same house at the same time. For, says Parasara " Sons born to the same father of different wives could be married in the same house, in the same hall, but they should have their sacrificial fires distinct."

Q.—But Lakshmana and Satrughna are born of the same father and mother. It is laid down that the ceremony of *initiation* (*Upanayana*) and *vivaha* (marriage) and *tonsure* (*Chaula*) should not be performed in the same year in the case of the sons of the same mother.

A.—It is allowed to be performed on the same day. For says the *Daivagnavilasa* "Vaidika ceremonies could be performed in the same day under the same rising sign (*Lagna*) but in different Amsas of the same, in case of two

brothers or two sisters or a brother and a sister or sons born of different mothers".

30. Ruler:

<i>Nakshatra</i>	<i>Ruler</i>
1. Aswini	The Aswins
2. Bharani	Yama
3. Krittika	Agni
4. Rohini	Prajapati
5. Mrigasiras	Soma
6. Ardra	Rudra
7. Punarvasu	Aditi
8. Pushya	Brihaspati
9. Aslesha	Sarpa
10. Magha	The Pitrīs
11. Poorva-phalguni	Bhaga
12. Uttara-phalguni	Aryama
13. Hastha	Savitha
14. Chitra	Twashta
15. Swati	Vayu
16. Visakha	Indragni
17. Anuradha	Mitra
18. Jyeshtha	Indra
19. Moola	Prajapati
20. Poorvashadha	The waters
21. Uttarashadha	The Visvedevas
22. Abhijit	Brahma
23. Sravana	Vishnu
24. Sravishtha	Vasu
25. Satabhishak	Varuna
26. Poorva-bhadrapada	Ajaikapad
27. Uttara-bhadrapada	Ahirbudhnya
28. Revathi	Poosha

(*Brihat Samhita*, 98).

205. 12. *Marriage rites* :—Careful and searching enquiries ought to be made if wisdom, tapas, virtue and other excellences adorn the boy's and the girl's ancestry ten generations back on the father's and the mother's side.—

Asvalayana Grihya Sootra, IX, 3.

One should marry his daughter to an intelligent youth.

Likewise the intended bride should be endowed with beauty, intelligence, and good behaviour. It is almost impossible to determine it by appearance or by enquiry and the following method is generally adopted. Eight balls of soft clay are made and over them are recited the mantra "Dharma was the first-born ; Dharma was in the beginning ; Truth has its roots in Dharma. Let this girl meet here with the fruits of her karmic acts; let truth manifest itself." She is asked to take one of them. If she selects a ball of clay from a field cultivated twice in a year, her progeny will be rich in corn. If it is from a cowpen, they will be rich in kine. If it is from a sacrificial altar, they will shine with unbound-ed spiritual lustre. If it is from a pool which never dries up, they will be rich in all the goods of the world. If it is from a spot devoted to gambling, they will be addicted to that vice. If it is from a spot where the cross-roads meet, they will be wanderers over the face of the earth. If it be from a hard ground, they will be poor. It is taken from a burn-ing ground, her husband will die soon."—*Ib.* I. 5.

Another ball should be placed before her made of a mixture of the various kinds of earth. If she happens to touch it or any of the first four, she is eligible for marriage.
—*Gobhila Grihya Sootra. XI, 1.*

A youth who has mastered three Vedas or two or even one and has observed the rules of Brahmacharya, may take upon himself the life of a householder. Having obtained permission of his teacher and having bathed at the close of the vow of celibacy and study (Vratasnana), he returns to his parents. He goes through the ceremony of Samavartana and takes to wife a girl of his own caste. He should not marry into the family of his mother's Sapindas (co-uterine relatives) or his father's Sahodaras. (Son, son's son, and son's grandson; widow, daughter, and daughter's son ; father, mother, brother, brother's son, brother's grand-

son ; father's daughter's son ; father's brother's son and grandson ; paternal grandfather's daughter's son, paternal grandfather, paternal grandmother ; paternal grandfather's brother, brother's son and grandson ; great grand-father's daughter's son). Nor he should marry into the following families :—

Childless persons : those that have abandoned Vaidika rites : those that have renounced the study of the Vedas : those having bodies covered with dark thick hair ; those afflicted with asthma : dyspepsia : epilepsy : white leprosy : black leprosy: chronic diarrhoea. Nor should the intended bride be rich in red flaming hair, or with extra limbs or members or afflicted with chronic illness, or utterly hairless, or with hair overgrown, or a shrew. He should avoid marrying a girl whose eyes are fiery red, or whose name is that of a constellation or tree, or a river or a low caste or a mountain or a bird or a serpent or a slave or any frightful object. He should not take to wife one who has no brothers, or one who knows not the name of her father. It is always wise to choose a girl not deficient in her limbs or members, with a soft and melodious name and with a gait like that of a swan or an elephant ; she should have as much hair on her head and body as is consistent with beauty, small even teeth and soft delicate limbs.—*Manusmrithi.* III.

There are eight kinds of marriage,

1. *Brahma* :—The father adorns his daughter gaily and gives her as wife to a Brahmana well conducted and wise in Vedic lore, pouring water over his hands meanwhile; the son born of this marriage benefits twelve generations before and after on both sides.

2. *Daiva*. The father adorns his daughter gaily and gives her in marriage to the sacrificial priest as a fee when the sacrifice is being conducted ; the son born of this marriage benefits ten generations before and after on both sides.

3. *Prajaapatya*:—The father gives his daughter in marriage to a likely youth after duly honoring him ; and pronounces over them a blessing—" May you fulfil your dharma perfectly." The son born of this marriage benefits eight generations before and after on both sides.

4. *Arsha* :—The father gives his daughter in marriage to a likely youth taking from him a bull and a cow; the son born of this marriage benefits seven generations before and after on both sides.

5. *Asura* :—The bride-groom gives as much wealth as he could afford to the girl and her kinsmen and takes her to wife. (This is called *Manusha* in *Vasishta Smrithi*).

6. *Gandharva* :—The parties are brought together by love and thereafter live as man and wife.

7. *Rakshasa* :—The girl is taken away by force when her kinsmen have been defeated and slain and their home-steads destroyed.

8. *Paisacha* :—Cohabiting with a woman when she is sound asleep or dead drunk or out of her senses.

The first four forms are to be preferred in that the sons born of such union are wise and honoured by good men ; they are blessed with length of days, beauty, wealth, fame and high principles. The progeny of the other four unions are cruel, untruthful and scoffers of the Holy Writ.—*Manu-Smrithi*. III., *Vasishta Smrithi*. I. *Apasthamba Smrithi* II ; *Bodhayana Smrithi* I. 20. *Asvalayana Grihya Soothra* I. 6.

The bridegroom should select the constellation Mrigasiras to send his friends and knowers of mantras to the house of the bride (*Varapreshana*). The first two mantras of Rig Veda X. 85. 23 should be recited on the occasion. The men carry with them flowers, fruits, wheat and a water-pot. His father, his Acharya and the others enter the bride's house and stand in the passage. The father calls aloud thrice " I am come." He next declares his family and Gothra and

asks the girl in marriage for his son. The visitors stand facing the west and the residents of the house face the east. When the proposal is accepted and the agreement ratified, flowers, fruits, corn, fried rice and gold are placed in a pot; it is touched and over it are recited the words "Thou art the unshaken lustre of the gods ; thou art unshaken by any thing; thou protectest from the curse, without being cursed, without coming under the curse. May I attain Truth even now. Bless me with welfare and prosperity." The Acharya of the bride's house stands and reciting Rigveda X. 85. 43, places the vessel on her head and says "I place in you offspring. I place in you kine. I place in you brilliance and spiritual lustre." When the bride's father has expressed his consent, the bridegroom makes his offerings to the fire. A square spot is smeared over with cow-dung and water is sprinkled on it ; the Sthandila is formed over it and the sacrificial fire is placed thereon with the words "I carry the fire with a joyful heart. May he unite me with welfare. Agni ! Do thou no harm to me, to the aged and to the young. Extend thy protection to us and to the kine." He wets his hand and passes it thrice round the fire and wipes it. Kusa grass is spread on four sides of it ; the Brahma priest is seated to the south of it and adorned with flowers ; clarified butter and the waters in the vessels named *Praneetha* and *Prokshani* should be purified. Two offerings of clarified butter are made into the fire from the ladle known as *Sruva*, the first from the north-west to the south when Rig Veda I. 31. 10 is recited ; and the next from the south-west to the north when *Ib* X. 121, 4 is recited. The offering in the north and in the south belongs to Agni and Soma respectively. Then an offering is made in the middle with the words "Agni is verily the Prajapati; may he give me —to wife, *Svaha*! Soma has countless wives ; may—bring me many wives, *Svaha*! Poosha has countless kinsmen; may

he give me countless kinsmen through the parents and brothers of _____, Svaha ! "—*Sankhayana Grihya Soothra I.* 7-10.

On the night previous to that on which the bride is taken to her husband's house, she is given at day-break a bath up to her neck in water fragrant with fruits, medicinal roots, plants, leaves and other sweet-smelling substances. She is dressed in a new piece of cloth and is seated before the fire ; she touches the Acharya who makes offerings of clarified butter to the Maha-vyahritis, Agni, Soma, Prajapati, Mitra, Varuna, Indra, Indrani, Gandharva, Bhaga, Poosha, Tvashta, Brihaspati and king Pratyaneeka. Four or eight married women are sumptuously fed and perform a dance four times, after which the Brahmanas are fed on a large scale. The bridegroom bathes and goes through the prescribed Vedic rites, after which he proceeds to the house of the bride surrounded by many married young women,—*Ib* I. 11.

With their consent he gives the bride a new cloth reciting Rig Veda X. 8, 56. He takes the box of collyrium with *Ib.* 7 and applies it to her eyes reciting *Ib.* 47. Then he says "May this protect you as it did Sachi the wife of Indra, Aditi the mother of glorious sons and Apala, the aged wife" and reciting *Ib.* VI, 47, 18, he places in her right hand a quill of the porcupine and in her left a thread of three strands and a mirror. Her kinsmen tie a black and red thread round her as talisman, in which three gems are strung ; and recite *Ib* X, 85, 28. The bridegroom ties on her body Madhooka flowers reciting *Ib.* IV. 57, 3; *Ib.* I. 12.

He gives her a new cloth with the words "May you live long. Wear thou this cloth. Protect men from every harm. May you live to a hundred years, with strength and energy. May you be surrounded with wealth and offspring. Wear thou this cloth with length of days." He gives her an upper garment with the words "May length of days come to you

from the gods that spun this warp and woof and stretched it tight on the sides. Put on this cloth blessed with a long life." The father of the bride applies collyrium to their eyes, the bride-groom uttering the words "May the Visvedevas and the Waters make our hearts one. May Matarisva, Dhata and Deshta, the good gods, make us one". He receives the bride from her father and takes her away from the place.

When she is on her way to her husband's house he says "Soma first knew you as wife ; then Gandharva and after him Agni knew you as wife ; then your human husband knew you. Soma, Gandharva and Agni passed you from one to another until from the last I got yourself, progeny and wealth. Pooshan ! Lead this woman unto me." He stands opposite to her and says "Free from the evil eye, you shall not cause death to your husband ; you shall bring good unto the kine ; you shall grow in years with undiminished strength and energy. Bring forth heroes and men of valour. May you be kind to all ; may your heart be full of devotion and piety. When you roam through the bright worlds on high far far with your mind, fleet as wind, many Vaikarna with golden wings turn your heart towards me—*Paraskara Grihya Soothra I. 4.*

When the birdegroom goes to the house of the bride, her father honours him with Madhuparka and again during marriage—*Sankhayana Grihya Soothra I. 12, 10.*

The bride takes hold of him while he makes three offerings into the fire uttering the Maha-vyahritis and a fourth, uttering the three Vyahritis.—*Ib. I. 12, 10.*

Her father or brother seats her facing the east and standing opposite to her the husband makes her an offering on her head with the point of a sword, reciting Rig Veda X, 85. 46. He grasps her right thumb with his right hand, seats her facing the east and standing opposite to her, recites the five mantras "I am this, you are that. You are that,

I am this. You are heaven, I am earth. You are Rig, I am Saman. So, you will be attached to me. Well, let us unite ourselves in bonds of marriage. Let us bring forth children. Let us be the parents of many long lived sons." The Acharya then says, "Bhooh, Bhuvah, Svaha" and fills a new vessel with water ; into it are thrown the leaves of a tree with a masculine name, boughs with the sap streaming from them, kusa grass and a piece of gold. It is given to a Brahmacharin who observes the vow of silence. The bridegroom and the bride go round the Stheya water placed to the north-east.

The Acharya places a slab of granite in the north-east. The bridegroom calls out to the bride "Delightful one ! come" and places the end of her right foot on it, saying "Come, place your foot on this stone ; may you be firm of heart even as this granite. Tread upon your enemies ; triumph over those that hate us." They go round the fire and a new cloth is given her, when Rig Veda X, 85, 6 is recited. Her father or brother pours into her joined palms fried grain mixed with the leaves of the Sami tree. She offers it into the fire, while her husband says "May I be the cause of joy to my kinsmen, May my husband live long." Three times should the stone be trod on with the accompanying ceremonies ; it may be repeated for the fourth time silently. Then the Acharya makes the couple walk seven steps to the north-east with the words "For essence one step; for sap two steps; for increase of wealth three steps; for welfare four steps; for kine five steps; for the seasons six steps; be thou attached to your husband with seven steps". Water is sprinkled over them; the Stheya water is magnetised with the Apohishteyya mantras and sprinkled over their heads.

When the bride is led away from her father's house Rig Veda X. 85, 24 is recited ; Ib, X, 40, 10, if she begins to cry; she smears the axle with clarified butter reciting Ib.

I. 82, 2, and the wheels and the two oxen. with *Ib.* X. 85, 12, 16. A bough of a fruit-bearing tree should be used as lynch-pin with *Ib.* VIII 80, 7 ; the oxen are to be yoked with *Ib.* I, 82, 5, 6 and after which is to be pronounced *Ib.* X. 85. 10. If any part of the chariot happens to give way or break, the bride is to be left in the house of an Agnihotri while the vehicle is to be repaired reciting *Ib.* III. 53, 19 ; X. 143, 2; after which *Ib.* V. 51, 11, 15 are to be recited. *Ib.* X, 85, 20 is to be uttered when she gets into the chariot; *Ib.* 32 at the cross-rods ; *Ib.* 31, near a burning ground ; *Ib.* III, 81, 11, near a large tree; *Ib.* X. 63, 10 when she gets into a boat; *Ib.* X, 53, 8 when she crosses a river; and *Ib.* III, 33, 13 over deep places; *Ib.* 85, 27, when they have reached the bridegroom's house. The skin of a red ox is spread on the ground with the hairs above, and she is seated on it; he makes four offerings into the fire with the words "Bhooh ! I satisfy you with Agni, with the Earth among the worlds, and with Rig Veda among the Vedas, Svaha! Bhuvah ! I satisfy you with Vayu, with the Vayuloka among the worlds and with the Yajur Veda among the Vedas, Svaha! Svah ! I satisfy you with the god Surya, with the Svarloka among the worlds and with the Sainaveda among the Vedas, Svaha ! Bhooh, Bhuvah, Svah ! I satisfy you with the god Chandra, with the quarters among the worlds, with the Brahma Veda among the Vedas, Svaha!" The bride holds on to him all the while. He touches her eyelids with melted butter, reciting *Ib.* X. 85, 44 ; and touches the ends of her hair, reciting *Ib.* IV. 31, 1, 2, 3 ; and pours what remains on her head, reciting *Ib.* VIII, 18, 8.

A boy of pure descent on both sides is placed on her lap and his palms are filled with fruit ; the husband makes the Brahmanas pronounce benedictions. She will bring forth sons. Then the married couple enter the house, reciting *Ib.* X-85, 42.

They drink curds, reciting *Ib.* IV. 31, 6 and remain silent until the sun sets and the pole-star is visible. The husband points it out to the wife and says "May you remain with me forever with increasing progeny". She replies "I see Dhruva. May I beget children" For three days they observe the vow of celibacy and sleep on the ground. They feed upon boiled rice mixed with curds, reciting *Ib.* VIII. 35, 10. and make offerings into the fire morning and evening with the words "Svaha ! to Agni, Svaha! to Agni Svishtakrit." He should never go out of the house on a journey during the next ten days—*Ib.* I, 13; II, 18.

Gobhila, Hiranyakesi, Apastamba, Asvalayana, Paraskara, and Khadira Grihya Soothras differ from the above in some respects ; but they are not essential points and were introduced to meet the ever changing conditions of time, place and men.

Punarvasu was the natal star of Rama ; the rising sign of the moon was Kataka (Cancer). Uttara Phalguni was the natal star of Seetha and her rising sign was Virgo (Kanya). The two stars have a common Nadi-koota and in consequence, kept the couple away from one another for a long time. They were bound to entertain unlimited love towards one another, since Cancer is the eleventh sign from Virgo, and Virgo the third from Cancer, which ensures the purity of the Rasikoota.

Many astrological works, such as the Kootastheeya, lay down that the star Uttara is best suited for marriage purposes, because it was the Jataka-tara of Rama ; and because it is regarded that girls had best be married under their natal star.

The following are some of the auspicious moments for celebrating marriages—when the moon is in the constellations of Rohini, Uttara Phalguni Uttarashadha, Uttara Bhadrapada, Revati, Mrigasiras, Moola, Anuradha, Magha,

Hastha and Swathi : when Virgo, Libra and Gemini are the rising signs ; when beneficent planets are in the other houses except the seventh, the eighth and the twelfth ; when the Moon is in the second, the third and the eleventh sign ; when the third, the sixth, the eighth and the eleventh signs are occupied by malefic planets ; when Venus is not in the sixth sign nor Mars in the eighth; when the rising sign is any other than the second, the eighth or the ninth from the natal Lagna of the couple ; when the Sun's course is happy ; when the Moon is not in the same sign as the Sun, Mars, Saturn, and Venus ; when the Moon is between two malefic signs ; when the yogas Vyatheepada and Vaidhriti or the Karana Vishti do not occur ; on the other days of the fortnight except the fourth, the ninth and the fourteenth, which are called empty days ; on other week days except those connected with the malefic planets ; during the winter solstice (Uttarayana) ; in the other months than the first and the tenth ; and when the human Navamsa is rising.—*Brihat Samhita*, 100.

If, at the time of the marriage, the rising sign is occupied by the Sun or Mars, the bride will be an early widow ; if Rahu, her son will die ; if Saturn, poverty will dog her ; if Venus, Mercury or Jupiter, she will be a model of chastity ; if the Moon, she will die early.

If the second house from the rising sign be occupied by the Sun, Saturn, Rahu or Mars, she will suffer from poverty ; if by Jupiter, Venus or Mercury she will be extremely rich and enjoy a long married life ; if by the Moon, she will be the mother of many children.

If the third house from the rising sign be occupied by the Sun, the Moon, Mars, Jupiter, Venus or Mercury, she will be wealthy and of numerous progeny; if by Saturn, she will be a universal favourite ; if by Rahu, she will meet with an early death.

If the fourth house from the rising sign be occupied by Saturn, she will be dry of milk ; if by the Sun and the Moon, she will be hated of others ; if by Rahu, her husband will marry another ; if by Mars, she will have barely enough to live upon ; if by Venus or Jupiter or Mercury, she will live happy.

If the fifth house from the rising sign be occupied by the Sun or Mars, her sons will die ; if by Jupiter or Venus or Mercury, she will have many sons ; if by Rahu, she will die early ; if by Saturn, she will be a victim to cruel diseases ; if by the Moon, she will bring forth girls.

If the sixth house from the rising sign be occupied by Saturn, the Sun, Rahu, Jupiter or Mars, she will be highly respected by all, and will behave with reverence to her father-in-law and other elders ; if by the Moon, she will become a widow ; if by Saturn, she will be reduced to poverty ; if by Mercury, she would be favoured of fortune and a virago.

If the seventh house from the rising sign be occupied by Saturn, she will be a widow ; if by Mars, she will undergo imprisonment ; if by Jupiter, she will suffer persecution ; if by Mercury, she will feel the pangs of misery ; if by Rahu, she will lose her wealth ; if by the Sun, she will be in the grip of chronic illness ; if by the Moon, she will be a traveller ; if by Venus, she will die early.

If the eighth house from the rising sign be occupied by Jupiter or Mercury, she will live away from her husband ; if by the Moon or Venus or Rahu, she will die young ; if by the Sun, she will enjoy a long married life ; if by Mars, disease will prey upon her ; if by Saturn, she will bask in wealth and in the love of her husband.

If the ninth house from the rising sign be occupied by Venus, the Sun, Jupiter or Mars, she will be of a righteous disposition ; if by Mercury, she will be sickly ; if by

Rahu or Saturn, she will be childless ; if by the Moon, she will give birth to girls and lead a wandering life.

If the tenth house from the rising sign be occupied by Rahu, she will become a widow ; if by Saturn or the Sun, she will become a sinner ; if by Mars, she will die young ; if by the Moon, she will be poor and unchaste ; if by the other planets, she will be rich and beloved of all.

If the eleventh house from the rising sign be occupied by the Sun, she will be the mother of many boys ; if by the Moon, she will succeed to much wealth ; if by Mars, she will give birth only to boys ; if by Saturn, she will be distinguished by her riches ; if by Jupiter, she will live long ; if by Mercury, she will be blessed with unbroken prosperity ; if by Rahu, she will die before her husband ; if by Venus, she will be happy in the possession of affluence.

If the twelfth house from the rising sign be occupied by Jupiter, she will be wealthy ; if by the Sun, she will be poor ; if by the Moon, she will lose her wealth ; if by Rahu, she will be unchaste ; if by Venus, she will be faithful to her husband ; if by Mercury, she will live to see her sons and grandsons ; if by Saturn or Mars, she will be addicted to drink.

It is best to perform the marriage when the cows come home in the evening and the sky is hid with their dust. It is called *Godhooli Lagna*. Wealth, corn, health, offspring and everything desirable flow from it ; it does not matter what constellation it is or yoga or karana or rising sign, or day of fortnight :—*Brihat Samhita*. 103.

28. *Here* :—Her unparalleled beauty, grace, youth and other excellences are patent. But, it is better to support it with the evidence of inference. She is unique in that she came not of mother's womb ; but rose to view at the end of a plough-share when I cleared the ground for sacrifice ; hence, her name Seetha.

Apart from her superhuman beauty, she is of the very highest lineage ; for is she not *my daughter* ? She comes of the line of Janaka who are justly famed as being the foremost in the practice of dharma. Your father Dasaratha went through countless pilgrimages, fasts, vows, observances, penances, sacrifices, and recitations and all to get you as his son ; no less was what I underwent to give my daughter in marriage to you. So, this is no ordinary girl : you ally yourself with.

But, let not the shadow of a doubt cross your heart that a girl of such charming beauty will serve no other purpose than sensual enjoyment ; you will not have to take another woman to wife to enable you to observe your *dharma of a householder*. She is a model of chastity and devotion to her husband. I know that your heart is ever open to the cry of those that seek refuge in you. I know that your motto is "I care not how many sins or defects ally themselves with the name of any one who turns to me for protection. If I fail to place myself and everything that I have at his service, I will be an object of eternal scorn to the good and the great." But, my girl is a meet companion in life for such as you ; nay, rather of a higher order in that she sees no evil in the world, nor any doer of evil.

29. *Accept* :—But you may say "True, she is as richly endowed with perfection as you say ; but, I will not take her unless you give her in marriage to me with your blessing." Take her hand in sign of holy union. It would be meaningless for me to say that I give her away to you in marriage ; for you are eternally wedded to one another, as primal Spirit and Matter. You will find it extremely helpful if you ally yourself to this my daughter, who is no other than Mahalakshmi, the Mother of all ; [you cannot hope to accomplish without the help of this Parasakthi (Supreme Energy) the object of your incarnation down here—the des-

truction of the Rakshasa race. Victory, fame and happiness, all are yours if you take Seetha to wife. Though you won her as the price of valour in a Swayamvara from among so many rivals, I would like that you marry her after the Brahma form by the taking of hands and not according to the Rakshasa or the Gandharva mode].

Q.—The Kshatriya bride is to take hold of an arrow during the marriage; then why should Rama take the hand of Seetha?

A.—Manu has said (III, 83. 84) “When the marriage is between members of the same caste, the hands are joined. If otherwise, the Kshatriya bride grasps an arrow, the Vaisya girl a whip and the Sudra maiden a piece of cloth. Go.

By the word *Seetha Janaka* meant purity of birth ; *my daughter* shows the utter purity of her place of adoption ; *faithful wife* shows that Seetha fell under the influence of the witching beauty of Rama, the supreme Maya that holds the universe in thrall ; *ever* shows that they are the Eternal Pair. Every time that the Lord comes down on earth, there will be such a union or marriage and all creation is blessed to see the wonderful sight which is faintly symbolical of what exists in the eternal Worlds—*Thanisloki*.

“Rama! Pride not thyself upon thy unparalleled beauty, excellences or might. For, this girl is in every way your equal ; so look at her well. But, you came out of woman’s womb in this manifestation of yours. She knew it not and there she is higher than you. As the bright gold comes out of the dark earth, Seetha, brighter than gold, came to me from the bosom of Mother Earth (vide Sree-sooktha beginning with *Hiranyavarnam*—golden-hued). Her chastity is of such a high order that she lives not when you are away from her. She is an ideal to all faithful wives, who grieve with their lords, joy with their joys, grow dispirited and faint when their husbands are away from

them and follow them instantly into the other worlds. But, she stands high above all other women in that she is a body into you, for, you live in her heart eternally. She is even as your shadow and knows no taint, for the taint, if any, is in the substance and not in the shadow. The daughter takes after the mother ; and Seetha is no less patient than her mother Earth. Lakshmi, the goddess of Fortune, never goes after any one ; but, one and all run after her and seek to attain her. So, Seetha here, never knows what it is to stretch her hand in request to any ; so, you should even put forth *your* hand and take hers.—*Vedanta Desika.*

206.5. *Lakshmana*: Q.—How could Lakshmana, the younger, be married before Bharata, his elder ?

A. The Smrithis say the order of seniority need not be strictly observed on occasions of sacrifice, the giving away of gifts and of marriages of the sons of paternal uncles, of the sons of co-wives or of the sons born to other women by the same husband.

12. *Made over* :—Kusadhwaja gave away Mandavi and Srutakeerti to Bharata and Satrughna and poured water over their hands, while Janaka gave his consent thereto. “The father, the grandfather, the brother, the male kinsmen and the mother may give away girls in marriage in the absence of those previously mentioned.” *Yagnavalkya Smriti.*

28. *Wedding day* :—Rishi Narada gave king Janaka to understand that Rama and Seetha came down on earth to free it from its heavy load of sin and evil. But, it was after the marriage that Vasishtha and Visvamitra were informed of it.—*Ad. R. I. 6.*

Rama and Bharata were of dark hue and were married to the golden-coloured Seetha and Mandavi. Lakshmana and Satrughna, of the colour of molten gold, took to wife Urmila and Srutakeerti of dark hue—*Tulasidas R. I.*

Janaka hastened to welcome Visvamitra, when a disciple of the sage came to him in secret and said " My master ordered me to give your majesty this message. I have brought here Rama and Lakshmana, the sons of king Dasaratha of Ayodhya. They will marry Seetha and Urmila, your daughters. Rama will break the bow of Siva that you have set forth to test the might of your prospective son-in-law. So, see that you receive the youths with all the honour due to their rank and valour and to your would-be sons-in-law. This is for your ears alone." Janaka accordingly ordered his city be gaily adorned, and went with his ministers and retinue to where Rishi Visvamitra was ; he offered the sage due reverence and, as if casually, asked him who the youths were. The Rishi related to the king their antecedents, whereat Janaka led them to his palace in gorgeous pomp. The women in the town gazed at the charming princes with their hearts in their eyes and exclaimed as if with one voice " Lo ! yonder dark youth is a fit husband for our Seetha, while the younger of the two will look handsome by the side of our Urmila. May the high Gods grant our prayers and may we behold the splendid sight." But, the other kings, who had been invited to the Swayamvara, grew black with envy and wrath and said " This Janaka showed us but scant courtesy erstwhile. Now, he could not busy himself enough to honour these brats. It seems that he has already settled it within himself to give Seetha in marriage to yonder Rama ; the Swayamvara is but a farce and our being invited to it too. Nay, it is a wanton and deliberate insult. And we are not the persons to sit quietly and swallow the indignity." Rama and Lakshmana were aware of it, as also Visvamitra and Janaka.

All were comfortably seated in the vast hall of Swayamvara, when Janaka rose among them and said " Parasu Rama, son of Jamadagni, stayed with Mahadeva as his

disciple to learn of him the science of war ; the Lord was pleased with him and gave him, as a mark of it, this bow with which he destroyed the Asuras of the three cities. Later on, Parasu Rama used this to exterminate the Kshatriya race on earth thrice seven times ; whereafter, he left it with me when he retired to the forests to perform tapas. Long after, he saw my girl Seetha playfully using it as a horse to ride on and was mightily amazed and said 'Janaka, my friend ! Give Seetha as wife to him who strings this bow'. And now, kings of the earth ! there is the mighty bow and here stands the charming Seetha'. The kings assembled looked longingly upon Seetha ; a madness came over them to possess her at any cost and they rushed to where the bow was. Some turned back in despair saying "It is far above us"; some went farther and put their strength forth to move it and went back shame-faced; some raised it ever so little, but dropped it at once as if it were live coal ; some never left their seats but shook their heads wisely and said "It is but foolhardiness unbecoming us to concern ourselves with what has defied the utmost efforts of our valiant friends".

It so happened that Ravana, king of the Rakshasas and ruler of Lanka, was travelling in his aerial car Pushpaka over the town and observing a large concourse of people under him, turned to his attendants Suka and Sarana and said "Know you any thing of this?" They knew not and Ravana, though all uninvited, came down into the Swayamvara-hall, to the great dismay of the people assembled there. "What is it, Janaka?", cried he "this looks verily like a Swayamvara, Wonder fair maiden is your daughter, I presume and these kings gathered around that bow are trying to lift it. So, that is the test. But, it applies not to me. We examine one whose abilities have not been put to the test." Now, gods and men know me only too well and will not be in a

hurry to forget it. To me, who rooted up like a reed the huge mount Kailas with Mahadeva, Parvati, Subrahmanyam, Ganapati and the dread Bhootas thereon, this old rotten piece of wood is utterly beneath contempt. Well, it is getting late. What say you? Shall I take away Seetha with me?" "Nay," replied Janaka "your might, your valour and your courage is world-famed, it is true. But, I have announced that I will hold a Swayamvara and it would not be seemly if I do not conduct it right. Besides, there are many here who have had no occasion to see for themselves your marvellous exploits. Of course, you will not deprive them of the pleasure. Now, there is a fitting occasion for it ; this is but a child's toy for you". Ravana was elated by this cunning and delicate flattery and cried "Well! have your wish, but more to give the young fellows here an idea of their elders." He proudly strutted along to where the bow lay, and gave it a careless push ; but it was a fixture. Surprised at it, he put his hand under it and tried to raise it up ; but, it was rooted to the earth. Then, he placed one after another, all his twenty hands under it and with a mighty effort, which almost cracked his sinews, he raised it aloft. But, as soon as he released one of his hands to stoop down and take the bow string, the huge bow tottered and fell upon him. He threw away the string and tried to steady it again with all his hands. But the momentum was too strong and he fell back with that terrible bow upon his breast. The gemmed crowns on his ten heads were ground to powder. His eyes hung out of their sockets. Blood gushed in torrents from his mouth, nose and ears ; and he fainted right away. His ministers almost killed themselves in their efforts to move the bow off their master. Janaka was filled with pity at the miserable plight of Ravana, the terror of gods and men and cried out " And is the world empty of heroes ? Has the race of valiant men

died out ? Is there none in this vast concourse that will roll this bow from off the breast of Ravana and save him from a miserable death ?" All hung their heads in impotence and shame. But, Rama and Lakshmana sprang forth like wounded serpents. Fire flashed from their eyes ; their limbs trembled with suppressed wrath and they looked hard and entreatingly at Visvamitra, their guru, like mighty lions straining at the chains by which their master held them. The Rishi, himself a fierce Kshatriya of old, felt with them and said in mild accents " Rama ! It is not seemly that we do not respond to the call of Janaka, our host ; nor are we good friends to the ruler of Lanka if we do not lend him a helping hand when he most needs it. As Kshatriyas, we are bound to help him. So, take that bow off his breast. And if you are so inclined, string it even as Janaka would have it." Rama put away his ornaments and drew near to where the bow was. But, the spectators thought otherwise and comments were freely exchanged, with hints of the probable result. "Is the boy mad or is it the love of mischief, natural to boys of his age? May be he means to have a look at yon Ravana with ten heads and twenty-hands. But, why should he put away his ornaments for it? Is he driven to it all unwillingly by that old Rishi yonder? He should have nursed no light grudge against him in that he consigns him to such a horrible fate. Nay, he is a knowing chap and has some trumps up his sleeve. It is not likely that a slip of a boy should succeed where *we* have failed with our tried strength and approved prowess." Janaka knew well that Visvamitra would not fail of his purpose ; but, the extreme youth of Rama and the delicacy of his limbs filled him with misgivings ; and he offered prayers to his guardian angels that the boy might come out safe and triumphant. Crowds of women were present at the Svayamvara and were interested spectators of the proceed-

ings from the galleries around. They were struck with the superhuman beauty of Rama, the perfect symmetry of his form and the boundless compassion that streamed from his eyes ; they could not take their eyes off him and almost lost themselves in the contemplation of such rare excellence. " Maheswara ! Vasudeva ! self-born Ancient !" cried they in earnest prayer, " May you infuse your might and energy into this youth that he may bend this terrible bow and come out of the test victorious. Mahadeva ! may this tough piece of wood and iron be soft to his touch even as a garland of delicate roses. May we be blessed to see our Seetha married to him." Meanwhile the princess was hard by with her maids and was gazing with her heart in her eyes at the scene. When Rama proceeded to bend the bow, she turned to her favourite attendant Tulasi and said " Alas ! My father is my cruellest enemy. My heart goes out to yonder prince and if my father should intend me for any other, I would seek the arms of death. But, what heartless people these men are ! You mighty mass of wood and iron is all unmeet for the flower-soft hands of the adventurous youth. I cannot congratulate my father on his intelligence in instituting such a test. I know not what the inscrutable fates have in store for me. Sankara ! Four-faced Father ! Vishnu ! Durga! Gayatri ! Savitri ! Sarasvati ! Indra ! Yama ! Varuna ! Kubera ! Agni ! Lakshmi ! Garuda ! Adisesha! Surya! Chandra! and ye bright planets ! I salute you all with profound reverence. Place all your might, all your energy in yon youth and make the hard bow soft and pliable to his hands. If he should bend it and win me as his bride, I hereby make a vow that I will remain for twice seven years in dark forests, leading the life of hermits." But, she was not the only person who prayed for the success of Rama; for Lakshmana, who stood hard by his brother, called out " Mother Earth ! Gather unto yourself all your energies, all your strength and

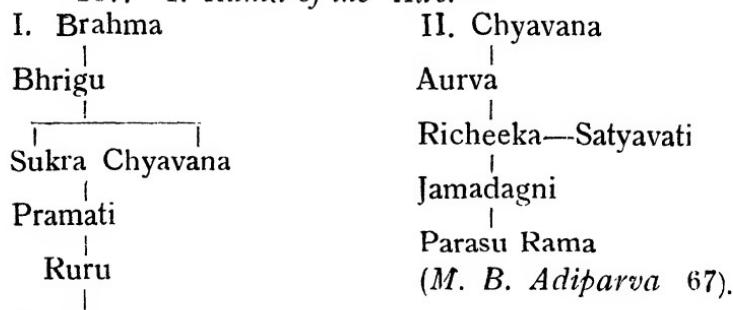
concentrate it on this spot ; for, Rama means to bend this bow and you will have hard work to save yourself from going to pieces. Adisesha ! Rouse thyself and bear the globe and every thing on it more carefully with thy thousand heads. Bend all thy energies to it. For, Rama means to break this bow of Siva, and the shock might prove too much for you. Ye gods and asuras ! Come one, come all ; for, you will never have another such chance of beholding the exercise of divine might. Your lives will bear fruit if you are privileged to witness so glorious a spectacle." But, Rama heard all, knew all and with an inscrutable smile, walked on to where the dread bow lay ; he went round it in reverence. He saluted in thought Mahadeva, the Lord of the bow, Dasaratha, his father, Kausalya, his mother, Vasishtha, the guru of his race and last, Visvamitra, his own acharya, who led him to victory; he next brushed away the huge bow from the body of Ravana, who, when he found himself free from the horrible weight that was crushing his life out of him, hung his head in speechless shame and slunk away from the hall even as a whipped hound.

Rama next raised aloft the bow of Siva with his left hand and strung it with the right. But, it was unable to bear the strain and broke into three pieces even as he was bending it. The heavens shook in affright; the oceans grew mad and broke their bounds ; stars rained from the sky ; Adisesha, the mighty Serpent, writhed his thousand heads in agony; huge mountains were torn off their bases; the rivers flowed back to their sources ; a soft and fragrant wind blew over the world ; heavenly flowers fell on the spectators below; gandharvas sang in sweet strains while apsarasas moved in harmonious measures to them; the women on the balconies covered the prince with sweet flowers ; and Seetha threw around his neck the bright garland of her love-laden glances,

Janaka ordered his ministers to fetch Seetha down to the hall. They seated her on the state elephant, took her round the town and brought her in pomp to the Swayamvara hall. She moved gracefully on to where stood he who won her as the prize of valour from the hands of countless kings and warriors ; she shot at him a lightning glance from under her dark lashes and placed a necklace of priceless diamonds on his shoulders ; she touched his feet with her head and stood abashed in maiden modesty. Rama bowed himself reverently at the feet of Janaka and Visvamitra. The sage embraced him warmly, seated him on his lap, smelt his head and could not contain himself for joy, now that the object of his quest was accomplished. Janaka gazed with pride and delight at Rama and Seetha and said "Holy sage ! Your grace has blessed me with every thing good and glorious. My line is made bright and illustrious before the world. I am honoured above compare to call Rama my son-in-law". Meanwhile, the kings assembled there were torn with conflicting emotions ; some hung their heads in shame ; some grew pale ; some cursed their ill-luck ; some could not take their eyes off Seetha. Then Janaka turned to them and said " Friends! My thanks are yours for the great honour you have done me in responding to my invitation to the Swayamvara. May I trespass upon your kindness by entreating you to give me your company yet a while until the marriage is over." They took counsel among themselves. " Surely it was an evil movement and unlucky when we started from our places. We cannot hope to fight with Rama and win at present. So, let us make the best of a bad bargain and see it out. Janaka will feel highly obliged. Later on, we shall even come back on a more favourable occasion and slay this brat and wipe away the stain on our valour". (Later on, during the marriage, Dasaratha said to his priest Satananda when they were seated in the marriage

hall "Reverend sir! Janaka told us that Seetha was found by him in the earth. Kindly narrate to me the details thereof"; and Satananda recounted the previous manifestations of Seetha).—A. R. I. 3.

207. 1. *Rama of the Axe*.—



* (*M. B. Adiparva* 5).

(N. B.) But the same chapter has it that Aurva had hundred sons, of whom Jamadagni was the first and that they had thousand sons. In the *Aranyakaparva* 117, Rama is mentioned as the fifth son of Jamadagni.

Bh. IX. 14 says that Jamadagni had numerous sons, of whom Vasumanas was the eldest and Rama was the youngest.

Aurva :—He was born of Chyavana and Arushi, the daughter of Manu and emerged from her thigh—*M. B. Adiparva* 67.

The Bhrigus were the sacrificial priests of King Kritaveerya of the line of the Haihayas. He respected them very much and at the completion of a Somayaga, gave them immense wealth. Later on, after his death, some of his descendants were sadly in want of a large sum of money and remembering that the Bhrigus had enough and to spare, requested them for assistance. But the brahmanas were loathe to give it away; some of them buried their money deep in the earth ; some gave it away in charity to their poorer clansmen ; some gave it to the

kings all grudgingly. But, they wanted more and dug here and there for hidden treasure. And in an evil moment they came upon a large store of wealth buried in the house of a Bhrigu; enraged at the deceit that had been practised upon them, they insulted and slew the Bhrigus, men, women, children and even babes in the womb. Some of the women took shelter in the Himalayan fastnesses. One of them, out of fear, bore her babe in one of her thighs for a long time, for the propagation of her race. But, another brahmana girl came to know of it and in her confusion and terror, informed the Kshatriyas of it. They hastened to destroy it ; but, the splendour that streamed from the pregnant lady drove them back. All at once, the boy burst forth from the thigh of his mother and his lustre took away* the sight of the revengeful warriors. They fell at her feet and entreated her pardon and for the restoration of their sight. "Nay" said she "I have nothing to do with it. It is not my wrath that has blinded you. This wonderful boy Aurva (thigh-born) is incensed at you and has begun his vengeance upon you by depriving you of your sight. I bore him in my thigh for a hundred years. All wisdom, human and divine, entered into him even when he was there. Take refuge in his mercy ere he consumes* you to ashes." They threw themselves at his feet and the boy forgave them. Aurva next began a course of terrible austerities to avenge the wrongs done to his ancestors ; and gods and asuras, man and beast were scorched thereby. But, the Fathers came down to him even from their high abodes and said "Child ! Full well do we know your might. Put away your wrath and give rest and comfort to the worlds. The Bhargavas that were killed of yore were not powerless to protect themselves from the kshatriyas. We were tired of our bodies and voluntarily brought about our death at the hands of the kings. It was

with a purpose that a store of wealth was buried in the house of a Bhargava ; and no pains were spared to inflame the warrior clan. What have we to do with wealth or riches, we whose wealth is our wisdom and pure life? Death has no power over us and it is a heinous sin to take away our lives. So, we adopted this method of freeing ourselves from our bodies. There is nothing for you to avenge, nothing to vent your wrath at." Aurva clasped his hands in reverence and replied, " But, my anger is just and righteous ; and it would consume me if I do not expend it upon some object. Advise me a course whereby the fire of my wrath would not be fruitless and would not consume me." " Then," said the Fathers "place it in the waters." He did so and it is there even now in the form of a mare's head Badava, and drinks of the water of the ocean—*M. B. Adiparva* 194-196.

The name Aurva occurs in Rigveda VIII, 102, 4, " Like Aurva-Bhrigu, like Apnavana, I invoke Agni, the pure, who is clad with the (samudra) sea." Both Aurva and Apnavana are included among the Rishis of the Pravara of a branch of the Bhrigus known as Jamadagna vatsah. According to the Vachaspatya dictionary, Aurva is the son of Rishi Urva. But, the above extract from the Adiparva makes no mention of the names of his parents, except that they were of the clan of the Bhrigus.

Narayana became the Maharshi Badavamukha for the good of the worlds. Once, he was engaged in tapas on the mount Meru and called the ocean to come unto him. It did not and his anger sent forth a fire from his body which deprived the waters of motion and they were saline like sweat. "None shall drink of you. Badavamukha shall take you into himself and you will come out of his body pure and sweet."—*M. B. Santi-parva* 351.

Siva created Badava as Kalagni, the fire that destroys the worlds when their work is over.—*Vachaspatya*.

Richeeka :—Aswalayana omits him in his list of the Pravara Rishis of the Gothra of Jamadagna vatsah. This is the same as is mentioned in *V. R.* I. 61 and 62 as living in the mount Bhrigutunda and of whom Ambareesha bought Sunas-sepha. The name of the first son is not given ; but the third is called Sunaka. *Harivamsa* 27, gives Jamadagni, Sunas-sepha and Sunah-puchha as the names of the three sons. But, the *Ait. Brahmana* makes the Rishi Ajeegarta the son of Suyavasa of the Gotra of Angiras ; his sons are Sunah-puchha, Sunas-sepha, and Suno-langoola ; the king is Harischandra, son of Vedhas. For changing Sunas-sepha from Suyavasa-Angirasa to Archika-Bhargava, the Rama-yana must have based itself on an older tradition, as a variant of that of the *Ait. Brahmana*. As the Sunakas belong to one of the seven branches of the Bhrigus, with Sunahotra and Gritsamada as their Pravara Rishis, it looks as if Sunas-sepha, whose name, like that of Sunaka is compounded with *suna*, came to be viewed as having belonged to the Bhrigus by birth. It is also said that Suna-hotra belonged to the Angirasa Gotra and gave his son Gritsamada in adoption to Sunaka of the Bhargava Gotra.—*Indo-Aryan Mythology* by Narayana Iyangar. Part II, pp. 343, 344.

Gadhi, king of Kanyakubja, retired to the forests to perform tapas. A daughter was born to him there, whom he named Satyavati ; and her the Rishi Richeeka Bhargava sought in marriage. But, Gadhi required of him a thousand horses, creamy white with black ears. Richeeka got them from Varuna and married Satyavati. One day, his father Bhrigu came down to his hermitage to see him and was mightily pleased with his daughter-in-law. “Choose thou a boon from me” said he. She prayed for a son to be born to her mother and another unto herself. “When you have bathed after your courses, you shall embrace an Aswattha tree .

and your mother an Udumbara ; then, you shall eat of these two *charus* that I have carefully prepared. "A mighty kshatriya shall be born to her and a saintly brahmana shall grace your line." Then, Gadhi and his wife came to Richeeka to see their daughter ; Satyavati told her of the boon she got from Bhrigu and showed her the two *charus*. Her mother persuaded her to exchange them. So, they embraced the wrong tree and ate of the wrong *charu*. Satyavati conceived a babe blazing with terrible kshatriya energy ; while in her mother's womb lay a babe of indescribably bright spiritual radiance. Bhrigu saw it with his eye of wisdom and came to Satyavati. "Daughter! you have done ill to exchange the *charus* ; your mother has deceived you, probably under the impression that I would have prepared a *charu* for you more precious. Therein she was wrong, for, in me there is no prejudice nor partiality. Now, a kshatriya of terrible deeds will be born of you, while a brahmana of mighty tapas will be born to king Gadhi." Satyavati trembled in affright and clasping his feet, entreated for mercy. "Lord ! I would that this evil come not upon me. You are almost divine in your powers to do and undo. I pray you to extend your forgiveness unto me." "Nay" replied Bhrigu " my word has gone forth, and cannot be taken back. But I will even do this for you ; I will modify it. Not your son, but your grandson, will be a brahmana-born, but a kshatriya of terrible deeds." And,in consequence, Jamadagni, the saint, was born to Richeeka and king Gadhi had Visvamitra as his son.—*Bh.* IX 15. ; *M. B. Vanaparva* 117 ; *Santiparva* 48 ; *Harivamisa* 31. [The above is varied in some of its details as follows :—

Satyavati requests her husband to bless her and her mother with offspring, and he prepares the *charus* for them.]

Jamadagni :—This name occurs in Rig Veda IX, 97, 51, as praising Soma, Varuna, Mitra, Sarasvati and other

deities and as being an exemplar worshipper like whom other worshippers wished to be.

It was he that instructed Visvamitra in the knowledge of Sasarpari—R. V. III, 53, 15 and 16.

Sayana explains the name as an adjective of Visvamitra himself, in the sense of one who has maintained the blazing Agni in the verse “Lauded by Jamadagni’s song, sit in the place of holy Law. Drink Soma, ye who strengthen Law”—R. V. III, 62.

The Sukla Yajur Veda (Muir’s *Texts* IV, P. 322), speaks of Jamadagni as having a triple life, the same that exists among the gods. This shows that he ranks among the gods. “Let us have a triple life, a triple life of Jamadagni, the triple life of Kasyapa, the triple life that exists among the gods.”

The name of Jamadagni’s wife is generally mentioned in the Bharata and the puranas as Renuka, the daughter of Renu, a king of the Ikshwakus; the *Aranyakaparva*, 117 names him Prasenajit; the *Kalika purana*, as quoted by Vachaspatya, makes him a king of the Vidarbha country; *Harivamsa*, 27, gives his daughter’s name as Renuka and Kamali. This name seems to be in substance identical with Kamayani mentioned in the *Taitt, Ekagni Kanda* II, 8, 10, where, in the rites performed by the bachelor as Snataka at the completion of his Vedic studies and preliminary to his entering the married state, he is made to adorn himself with a garland of flowers, reciting the mantra “I wear together with Bhaga’s splendour, the garland which Jamadagni brought to Sraddha-Kamayani.” Here Kamayani may be viewed as an adjective of the goddess Sraddha, one who desired to wear the garland. But the same goddess Sraddha praised in R.V. X. 151 as one who is to be realised by the yearning of the heart, is called in the Anukramani as Sraddha-Kamayani, the daughter of Kama or Desire. It

appears to me that Jamadagni's puranic wife Kamali *alias* Re-nuka is identical with the Vedic goddess Sraddha Kamayani of the Snataka's garland mantra, and that Renuka or she who is scented with the pollen of flowers, is a name coined for her to indicate that she is the same spiritual Lady Faith whom Jamadagni adorned with the garland of flowers. Such being her nature, her father's name Renu (Pollen) requires no explanation, while the other name Prasenajit may be taken to mean one who has conquered the Sena or army of desires ; or in other words, one who is satyakama, having satya, the true self for his desire, for it is only such a man that is fit to be the father of Sraddha Kamayani.—*Indo Aryan Mythology*, Part II. pp. 347-349.

Soon after his marriage, Jamadagni was practising archery and employed his young wife Renuka to go and fetch the arrows back to him. It was in the month of Jyeshta (June, July) and the sun was high in the heavens. Renuka naturally took shelter for a while under a tree, as her head and feet were scorched by the burning rays. Jamadagni rebuked her for the delay, but, on learning the cause thereof, he prepared to shoot down the wicked sun. Whereupon, the Lord of Day stood before him in the guise of a brahmana and said “Wherein has the sun offended you ? He is the source of light and heat; he draws up into himself the essence of the waters and gives them back as welcome rain. Further, he is always moving with extreme rapidity and I do not see how you will hit him.” “I know you” replied Jamadagni “I will transfix you when you stand motionless for half a moment at midday.” The sun grew afraid and took refuge in his mercy, who asked him to devise some means whereby the creatures of the earth could pursue their work unharmed by his blazing rays. Then the sun gave him an umbrella and a pair of slippers.—*M.B. Anusasana-parva* 144, 145,

As the Snataka who has completed his Vedic studies not only adorns himself with flowers, sandal, and collyrium, but also wears an umbrella and a pair of shoes, the aim of this story seems to be to show by allegorical language how Jamadagni, who was suggested by the Snataka's garland mantra to have himself been a great Snataka, completed his studies and acquired the paraphernalia of a Snataka from the sun-God himself. He pursues his Vedic studies with Renuka who, we saw, is Sraddha, Faith or Devotion, a spiritual Lady whose company the bachelor student must needs have while shunning the company of real women. She assists in his shooting the arrows of his intellect at the subjects of his studies again and again ; the shooting means not killing, but winning the aim ; and when at last she leads him to aim at the summer sun, who by means of his warmth and rain is the doer of universal good, his study is completed. The sun symbolizes the Udgeetha or the sacred syllable *Om* (*Chandogya Up.* I, 5, 1), which according to several Upanishads, represents the Supreme Self. The knower shoots Hirn with his self as the arrow and becomes merged in Him (*Mundakopanishad* II, 2, 4). When the summer sun symbolizing the Self of universal good is aimed at and understood, the study of all the Vedas and the Vedanta is completed.—*Indo Aryan Mythology, Part II*, p. 350).

Parasu Rama :—He was born in the Treta Yuga, in the year Pramati, in the month of Chitra, on the night of Saturday, the eleventh of the bright fortnight, the constellation Rohini presiding—*Translator*.

One day Renuka went to the river Narmada to have her bath and saw there Chitraratha the king of Martikavata, disporting himself with his wives. Her heart went out to him ; but, the next moment she realized the awful sin she had committed and was overcome with grief and fear. Shorn of the rays of her chastity, she fell down from the firmament,

through which she was coursing, into the deep waters of the Narmada. With much difficulty, she managed to reach the land and went back to her hermitage trembling with fear. Jamadagni of the open Eye, saw her spiritless, lustreless and dull. Then, his sons happened come into the cottage from the woods where they had been to gather fruits and roots. He ordered them in turn to kill her—Rumanvan, Sushena, Vasu and Visvavasu. They stood speechless with surprise and fear ; their disobedience entailed upon them a dreadful curse by which they were reduced to the level of beasts and birds, dull, idiotic and senseless. Rama the youngest, was the last to come in and to him spoke Jamadagni. “This, your mother, has sinned foully and deserves not to live. Slay her at once.”

And Rama went to where his mother was and lopped her head off with his axe. Jamadagni put away his anger from him and he asked his son to chose any boon of him. Then said Rama “I pray that my mother be cleansed of her sin ; that she might be restored to life and have no recollection of this incident. May my brothers be restored to their former selves. Let my days on earth be long and let me not be defeated on the field of battle.”—*M. B. Vanaparva 117.*

[The following is another variant of the above. Renuka was a model of chastity. She used to go to the river Narmada every day, have her bath and take up a handful of river sand, which, by reverent meditation on her husband, she converted into a solid water-vessel. But, when she became impure of heart, she could not, as before, make a solid vessel out of the loose shifting sand. After fruitless efforts, she went back to her husband, who thereby came to know of her sin].

During his boyhood Rama betook himself to the holy Chakrateertha and prayed long and earnestly to Vishnu.

The Lord stood before him and said " I grant you the wish of your heart and infuse you with my energy. In days to come, Kartaveerya Arjuna will foully slay your father. You will kill him in battle and root out the kshatriyas on earth twenty-one times with your axe. You will then give away this earth to Kasyapa in gift and lay by your weapon. I go down to the earth in the next Tretayuga as the son of Dasaratha, and will take back the energy which I have placed in you. You will live on to the end of this day of Brahma, engaged in meditation and will come back to me in the end."—*Ad. R. I. 7.*

Rama was instructed in the six-lettered mantra of Vishnu by Kasyapa and meditated upon the Lord on the holy mount Salagrama. Vishnu appeared unto him and said " I will place in you my energy to free the earth of the load of evil. You will wipe out the wicked brood of kings and will come back to me when your work is over on earth." He made over to him his axe, bow and arrows.—*Padmapurana, Uttarakanda, 268.*

Rama practised severe austerities to find favor with Mahadeva. Sankara was pleased with his purity and earnestness and said to him, "Rama! You will have the weapons you desire when you are pure enough ; else, they would consume you quite." Then Rama passed a thousand years, engaged in the performance of sacrifices, homas, recitations, gifts, vows and penances. Sankara spoke of him in terms of approbation to Uma, the rishis and the gods. Later on, when the gods sought the protection of Siva against the oppression of the asuras, he sent for Rama and said " My energy shall be on you. Go and put down the turbulent asuras." Mahadeva was highly gratified with the way in which he discharged his trust, and instructed him in the science and art of all weapons human and divine.—*M. B. Karna-parva, 34.*

One day, during his stay with Sankara at Kailasa, he excelled Skanda by sending a sharp arrow through the mount Krouncha, which pleased Mahadeva so much that he gave him his own axe—*Mallinatha's commentary on the Meghadoota of Kalidasa I. 57.*

Mahadeva was pleased with Rama's devotion to him came to where he was performing tapas on mount Gandhamadana and gave him his axe and divine weapons.—*M. B. Santiparva 48.*

One day Jamadagni and Renuka were alone in the cottage ; their sons had gone out as before into the woods. Then Arjuna, son of Kritaveerya, came there and Renuka entertained him hospitably. Proud and haughty, he was not in the least pleased by the reception accorded to him ; and by force and in defiance of all resistance, he carried away the calf of the cow that supplied the rishi materials for with his offerings. He heeded not the pitiable cries of the calf and went away, destroying the trees around the hermitage. Rama came back in the evening and to him Jamadagni related the incidents. The cow bleeting for its calf filled Rama with such wrath that he pursued the wicked king and slew him in battle, lopping off his thousand arms like so many rotten boughs. Arjuna was already touched with the hand of Death and Rama was the instrument of Fate. The kinsmen of the king were filled with rage and shame and they came upon Jamadagni and his wife while their sons were away. The sage was in profound meditation at the time ; he would not fight though he was master of the art of war, human and divine. His foes pierced him with their keen shafts and Jamadagni met his fate at their hands, calling upon his favourite son Rama to the last. Sometime after, Rama came back to the hermitage's laden with fuel and beheld the direful sight. “ Mine is the blame,” cried he “ that I have allowed you to be slain

like an animal by those mean and stupid kshatriyas. How did the Fates permit it that you should die in this way, - virtuous, inoffensive and unswerving from the path of righteousness ? Awful indeed is the sin of those wretches in that they have killed you with numerous keen arrows—and you, alone, helpless, aged and plunged in profound meditation". He performed the funeral rites for his departed sire and then and there made a terrible vow not to rest nor lay down his axe until he had wiped the wretched kshatriyas from off the face of the earth. He began with the sons of Kartaveerya, and he spared not, but slew and slew until the name of kshatriya was a thing of the past on earth. He filled five large-lakes with their blood and offered libations to his ancestors. Jamadagni appeared to him and asked him to desist from the slaughter. Rama thereafter celebrated a splendid sacrifice and gave away the earth to the priests therein. To Kasyapa he made a gift of an altar of solid gold 10 cubits by 9. He retired to mount Mahendra and engaged himself in holy meditation. Jamadagni became one of the seven rishis of this manvantara ; and Rama will take his place among them in the next, along with Kripa, Aswatthama, Krishnadwaipayana, and Rishyasringa, Galava and Deoptiman.—*M. B. Aranyakartha 117. Bh. VIII, 13.*

He comes from his retreat to the earth on the fourteenth day of every fortnight.—*Ib. 118.*

Jamadagni son of Bhrigu, prayed for long years to Indra on the banks of the Ganga and got from him Kamadhenu, the Cow of Plenty. One day, Arjuna Kartaveerya came to his hermitage, and was entertained with splendid hospitality, he and his countless armies. Arjuna was struck with wonder at the inconceivable powers of Kamadhenu and requested the Rishi to make a gift of it to him. " Nay, it is not mine " replied the sage. " Indra has placed it with

me." Arjuna tried to take it by force ; but, it destroyed his armies in a moment and went back to Swarga. Arjuna, in his mad wrath, slew the unoffending sage most foully—*Padmapurana, Uttarakanda 268.*

Long after, the sages were gathered together during a sacrifice at the holy Yayatipatana, when, Paravasu, the son of Raibhya and the grandson of Visvamitra, taunted Parasu Rama. " You have kept your word nicely, even as becomes a Brahmana and the son of Jamadagni. You have every claim to speak of yourself in such high terms in this large assembly. They say that you made a terrible vow to wipe out the kshatriya race from off the face of the Earth. Yonder Pratardana and his kind are not, I believe, kshatriyas in your estimation. In fact, the earth is overrun with them. Now, I see why you take shelter in mount Mahendra, fearing the just vengeance of those whom you slew." Rama was almost beside himself with rage and mortification and began his terrible work anew, destroying the old and the young, the infant on the breast and the babe in the womb. Time after time he laid his axe at the root of the kshatriya clan. Many ladies concealed their children from his anger. At last, Kasyapa, cunningly managed to get from Rama the whole of this Earth as a sacrificial gift, and resolved to put an end to this wholesale massacre. So he said to Rama, " The earth is mine by right of gift. It is my wish that you stay not in any portion of my dominions. It is not meet that you take back or use a thing you had given away. Proceed at once to the shores of the southern ocean," Rama accordingly repaired there and the ocean, out of dread of him, complied with his wishes to give him a portion of itself for his abode ; and it was known ever after as Soorparaga. Kasyapa made over the earth to the Brahmans and went away. But, there was none to keep order

and dispense justice. Chaos, anarchy and dire confusion set in. Vaisyas and soodras took to themselves the women of the higher castes, and there was none to prevent them. The weak fell a prey to the strong. Wealth and power exchanged hands very rapidly. Some degraded brahmanas, grew big with pride, and gave out that they were oracles of wisdom and repositories of knowledge, but belied their pretensions by steeping themselves in drink. Brahmanas set the example and the others readily followed, with the result that they were at each other's throats in no time. Theft, oppression, untruth, and immorality were the order of the day. The few that cling to the right discharge of their duties were cruelly slain by the over-whelming numbers of wicked and cruel hearted wretches. Sacrificial halls, hermitages, and temples were scenes of cruelty and carnage ; none escaped, women, old men, children or cows; the Spirit of the Earth fled away in affright to the nether worlds. Srutis and smritis, kingly polity, justice, and order were clean forgot. The brahmanas, many of them, found it more convenient to openly profess the life of outcastes and mlechhas. Kasyapa took pity on the misery of the earth and protected her in his thigh (*Uru*) ; hence one of her names *Urvi*. She mentioned to him such men still on earth who could protect her. "Many of the kshatriyas of the Haihaya line have been concealed by me among their women. The son of Vidooratha of the line of Purooravas is brought up by bears on mount Rikshavan. Rishi Parasara protects, unknown to any, the son of Saudasa. He is otherwise known as Sarvakarma (man of all work), because, though a kshatriya, there is no work that he does not in the Rishi's hermitage. Sibi's son is brought up by cows in the forest ; hence his name Gopati (the lord of cows). There is Vatsa (the calf), the son of Pratardana, so called because he was brought up

by the cows in the cow-pen. Rishi Gautama brings up Anga, the son of Dadhivahana and grandson of Diviratha. Brihadratha is protected by the huge apes on mount Gridhrakoota. The ocean conceals in her depths many warrior princes of the line of Marutta. And many others are now pursuing mean occupations as sculptors, architects, masons, and gold-smiths. Now, there is no lack of men to protect me." Then Kasyapa sent for those princes and made over to them the various kingdoms of the earth.—*M.B. Santiparva.* 48.

Parasurama, having carried out his promise to his ancestors, prepared to retire from the world ; he would give away his wealth to the brahmanas. Now, Drona the son of Bharadvaja, desired to obtain from him his knowledge of the art of warfare and of the weapons, human and divine. He proceeded to where Rama was, to mount Mahendra, accompanied by his disciples. He touched the earth with his head before Rama, and proclaimed his family and lineage. "What can I do for you?" asked Rama. "I desire of you" replied Drona "inexhaustible wealth." "I am so sorry. I have given away the earth with all the wealth it has to Kasyapa and the brahmanas, and have nothing left with me but this body and my knowledge of weapons, human and divine ; which will you have?" "If you allow me the choice" replied Drona "I would even pray that you instruct me in the knowledge of weapons thoroughly and in detail." And thus Drona became the repository of the knowledge of Rama.—*M. B. Adiparva* 140.

Bheeshma won, in a swayamvara, the hands of Amba, Ambika and Ambalika, the daughters of the king of Kasi, to be wives of his younger-brother Vichitra-veerya. Just before the wedding day, Amba, the eldest, said to Bheeshma "Respected sir! you are the soul of virtue and justice. I put my case before you and leave

you to decide what is best for me. My heart has gone out to the king of the Salvas ; and he has proclaimed his love to me, though all unknown to my parents. So, I am in great doubt whether I could give myself over to another." Bheeshma sent her with all care to her affianced ; but, he rejected her, as being already the lawful bride of another, having been won by Bheeshma in the swayamvara. He would not listen to her protests and declarations of love ; he heeded not that she had permission from Bheeshma to go back. So, she came back weeping, even to where Bheeshma was. She knew not whom to vent her wrath upon—Bheeshma or her father or the king of the Salvas, but she at last pitched upon Bheeshma to wreak her revenge. She retired to the forests and sought council with the hermits. One day, her maternal grand-father, Hotravahana, came there and was informed of the incident. He advised her to take refuge with Rama, son of Jamadagni. "For, Bheeshma dare not disobey him; he owes his knowledge of the art of war to Rama." Then Akritavrana, the bosom friend and companion of Parasurama, came there and to him Hotravahana preferred his request. "Tomorrow, on the fourteenth day of this fortnight, Rama comes here and I will see that he sees justice done to the princess." It was done and Rama took her to Bheeshma and said "Son! Take back this lady for, she has justice on her side." But, Bheeshma represented to him the other side and proclaimed his resolve to meet his preceptor in battle and win or die rather than commit himself to an act unworthy of a kshatriya. Then a fierce battle ensued between them for twenty-three days. Now Rama won, now Bheeshma. One night Bheeshma went to sleep in a despondent mood ; and in a dream he saw before him the foremost of the Shining Ones who revived him before when he was felled to the earth by the fierce arrows of Rama. "Fear not, my son ! Rama will not

defeat you in battle, but rather the other way. There shall come back to you even now the knowledge of the weapon Prasvapana. It appertains to Brahma, and was manufactured by Visvakarma. No one knows it, Rama or any other ; but it is yours, for, it was known to you in your previous birth. Rama, your foe and preceptor, will not be killed outright by the discharge of this weapon, but will only fall asleep from which you can awake him by the astra Sam-bodhana. Thus you will have defeated Rama and yet not be exposed to the heinous sin of slaying a brahmana and acharya ; besides, he cannot meet with death at your hands, for he has very long to live " Then the eight Shining Ones went away. The next day there was a fierce fight between Rama and Bheeshma, during which both of them, as a last resource, discharged their Brahmastras at one another. The worlds and their inhabitants were sore afflicted and trembled in dread affright. Bheeshma then called unto himself the wonderful astra Prasvapana and it came to him with the mystery of its discharge and withdrawal. He made ready to discharge it at Rama, when there arose a mighty tumult in the sky and voices were heard exclaiming " Bheeshma ! Do not use that astra against Rama." Narada advised him to the same effect and the eight Shining Ones said to Bheeshma from on high " Do as Narada tells you, for this is highly beneficial to the worlds." Thereupon Bheeshma withdrew the Prasvapana astra and infused all his might into the Brahmastra. Rama saw that his foe took back the dread astra and cried out in great excitement " Fool that I am ! Bheeshma has defeated me." Then his father and his ancestors came down to him and consoled him gently. " Rama ! You did ill to fight with Bheeshma, who is a kshatriya and bound to fight. It becomes you not, a brahmana, to turn your heart from meditation and study to battle and carnage. It was for a special pur-

pose that you were made the instrument of a mighty vengeance to be wreaked on the kshatriyas. But, it is all over and past, and you have no call to take it up anew. This Bheeshma is one of the mighty Vasus and cannot be defeated by you; Arjuna, the son of Pandu, is Bheeshma's Fate." But Rama exclaimed "I will never draw away from the fight, for that is my vow. If it so pleases you, persuade Ganga's son to do it." Then Richeeka, Jamadagni, Narada and the others requested Bheeshma to desist from battle. "No" said he "it is my duty as a kshatriya never to turn my back upon my enemy." Then Narada, his mother Ganga and the eight Shining Ones pacified Bheeshma and severely wounded as he was, he went up to Rama and bowed low before him. His late enemy embraced him affectionately and said "I, the terror of the kshatriyas on earth and their exterminator, do here proclaim that no kshatriya deserves to stand beside you either in the past or in the present. I have been highly pleased with you in that you have stood by your vow and duty unflinchingly."—*M.B. Udyoga-parva* 174, 185.

Rama's ancestors found it difficult to stay his hand from the slaughter of the kshatriyas, and related to him the following incident to make him put away his wrath:— There was a Rajarshi by name Alarka, perfect in all the virtues of his order. He triumphed over his enemies and ruled his vast dominions in peace. One day he was sitting under a leafy tree, having resigned his kingdom into the hands of others. Said he to himself "All my strength comes to me by my mind. I must reduce it to subjection if I am to call myself victor. It is the mind that induces men to run after things that help them not. So, I shall pierce it with keen shafts." "Nay" replied Mind "these your arrows can do me nothing; if at all, they will pierce your vital parts and you

will die. Go, find arrows of another sort that will make you my master."

Alarka thought over it and said, "The organ of smell enjoys various odours and hankers after them. So, I will discharge my arrows even against the organ of smell," "Nay" replied Smell "these your arrows can do me nothing; if at all, they will pierce your vital parts and you will die. Find arrows of another kind that will make you my master."

Alarka thought over it and said, "The organ of taste enjoys various tastes and hankers after them. So, I will discharge my arrows even against the organ of taste." "Nay" replied Taste "these your arrows can do me nothing ; if at all, they will pierce your vital parts and you will die. Go, find arrows of another sort that will make you my master."

Alarka thought over it and said "The organ of touch enjoys various contacts and hankers after them. So, I will discharge my arrows even against the organ of touch." " Nay" replied Touch " these your arrows can do me nothing ; if at all, they will pierce your vital parts and you will die. Go, find arrows of another kind that will make you my master".

Alarka thought over it and said " The organ of hearing enjoys various sounds and hankers after them. So, I will discharge my arrows even against the organ of sound." "Nay" replied Sound "these your arrows can do me nothing; if at all, they will pierce your vital parts and you will die. Go, find arrows of another kind that will make you my master."

Alarka thought over it and said " The organ of sight enjoys various sights and hankers after them. So, I will discharge my arrows even against the organ of sight." " Nay" replied Sight "these your arrows can do me nothing ; if at all, they will pierce your vital parts and you will die. Go, find arrows of another kind that will make you my master."

Alarka thought over it and said, "This mind very often allies itself to Buddhi (Reason). So, I will discharge my arrows at Reason." "Nay" replied Reason, "these your arrows can do me nothing ; if at all, they will pierce your vital parts, and you will die. Go, find arrows of another kind that will make you my master."

Then Alarka engaged himself in a course of tapas of unheard of severity, but acquired not the kind of arrows by which he could pierce the seven mentioned above. He thought over it deeply for a long time and at last decided to have recourse to yoga as his last hope. So, he made his mind one-pointed, concentrated all his energies, curbed his wandering fancies and lo ! he pierced his senses beyond hope with a single arrow. It was yoga that realised for him his supreme wish. In mighty surprise, Alarka said to himself, "What a pity it is ! Till now, I have wasted my efforts and energies on my kingdom, my wealth, my people and my enjoyments. It was never given me to know that in yoga lies supreme happiness."

And Rama laid the words of the pitris to heart and retired to mount Mahendra to engage himself in tapas.—*M. B. Aswamedhika-parva* 31.

Parasurama was overshadowed with the energy of the Lord and hence, he was no Poorna-avatara. He is not an object of worship—*Padmapurana, Uttarakhanda*.

He has a seat in the hall of Yama—*M. B. Sabha-parva* 8.

He knew that Mahavishnu came down on earth as Sree Rama ; and acted in apparent antagonism to him only to proclaim his greatness and glory to the world.—*Raghuvamsa XI. 15.*

Parasurama heard reports of the marvellous might of the son of Dasaratha ; and wishing to test it, proceeded to Ayodhya, taking with him the bow with which he had slain

countless Kshatriyas. Dasaratha was informed of his arrival and sent Rama to receive him. Said Parasurama with a smile "Let me see you string this bow that had sent many a kshatriya to the realms of death." "Holy sir!" replied Rama, "It is not meet that you disgrace me thus. I am instructed full well in the duties of my order. We of the line of Ikshwaku are not much given to speak of ourselves." "Have done with your words" retorted Parasurama "I know your mock-modesty. Get to work". Rama's brow grew black with wrath; he took the bow from Parasurama's hands, bent it like a feather and strung it. He drew it to his ear and the twang was so dreadful that all creatures fell down senseless. "Well" said Parasurama "you are not so bad as I thought. But, let me see you place this shaft on the string and discharge it." Then Rama's anger broke out and he said, "I chose to put up till now with your taunts and gibes. You are awfully proud for a brahmana. Brahma has, I believe, endowed you with greater energy than the kshatriyas. That is why you seek to shame me. But I will raise the veil from before your eyes and enable you to see me as I am." Then Parasurama beheld a mighty Being before him whose form extended far far into limitless space; Adityas, Vasus, Rudras, Sadhyas, Maruts, Pitrис, constellations, planets, Gandharvas, Rakshasas, and Yaksas; rivers, sacred shrines, oceans, mountains, sacrifices, serpents, clouds, lightning, all were there. Brahmarshis, Devarshis, the Vedas, the Valakhilyas, the Science of war, and everything stood out distinctly in it—the Past, the Present and the Future. Then Rama discharged the arrow and the worlds were sore afflicted. It drained Parasurama of his spiritual lustre, and went back to him who sent it. Parasurama recovered from his amazement, saluted Sree Rama and with his permission, went to mount Mahendra. The Pitrис saw that he was

humbled, repentant and keenly alive to his disgrace ; and consoled him saying, " Child ! Remember that your so-called defeat is at the hands of Him who is the Ruler of the Universe, the Fountain of energy. It is our privilege and duty to lift our hearts in devotion to him. Bhrigu, your ancestor, performed tapas in the Krita Yuga at the holy spot Deeptoda. Go there and recover your former glory and might by stern tapas."—*M. B. Vana-parva.* 98.

Karna approached Parasurama to learn from him the secret of the Brahmastra ; and knowing that Drona would not instruct him therein as he was not pure enough, he repaired to mount Mahendra, saluted Parasurama and said that he was a brahmana of the Bhrigu line. Rama acceded to his request, and Karna stayed with him to be instructed. His patience, humility, assiduity and devotion was so great that Rama initiated him into the mysteries of the discharge and withdrawal of the Brahmastra. One day it was very hot and Rama, enfeebled by long fast, slept with his head on the lap of his favourite disciple Karna; when there approached them a frightful creature with eight feet, sharp teeth, short needle-like hair all over its body, wrinkled limbs and pig-like in form. It fed upon flesh and blood and was horrible to see. It put its keen snout into the thigh of Karna and bored a hole into it. Blood flowed in torrents ; the agony was excruciating ; but Karna, as a kshatriya, put away from him the sense of pain and discomfort and his face was calmer than before. He would not shake away the dreadful thing lest his guru's sleep should be disturbed. But, his blood drenched Rama's body and he awoke. He looked at the pool of blood and at the dreadful creature wallowing in it and at the face of Karna, calm and serene as a statue. " What is this ?" cried he " How came you to be thus ? This blood has defiled me." Karna pointed to the creature

and related what took place. Rama looked at it and even as he did so, it gave up its life in the very blood it had shed. All at once, there appeared in the sky a Rakshasa seated on a cloud, swarthy of complexion, red-throated, deformed, and capable of assuming any form. He clasped his hands in reverence and with a full heart said to Rama " May all good be thine. Give me leave to go whence I came. I am freed by you from this hell ; and I and mine are ever yours to command." Parasurama asked him " Who are you ? How came you into this hell ?"

He replied " In former times, I was Damsa the Asura and a friend of Rishi Bhrigu. I entertained an unholy passion for his wife and abducted her. Your ancestor came to know of it and cursed me. ' Wicked wretch ! Go down to hell and feed upon urine and phlegm.' I clasped his feet and prayed for a mitigation of the punishment. ' Rama of my line will deliver you from this fate' said the sage, and you have been the means of restoring me to my happy life." He then rose to the regions on high.

Rama turned with wrath on Karna and cried " Fool ! No brahmana will and can endure this horrible agony; but you appear as undaunted and oblivious to pain as a kshatriya. Speak the truth and palter not with me. " Karna was afraid of the rishi's curse and replied " Bhargava ! I come of the sootha class that is neither brahmana nor kshatriya. I am Karna the son of Radha. The Books tell us that the teacher who imparts knowledge to us is verily our father; hence, I thought I was justified in calling myself a Bhargava. Rather blame my love of knowledge that tempted me sore". He clasped the feet of the irate sage and trembled with fear and sorrow. But Rama seemed to consume him with his fierce wrath and said, " Fool ! you have deceived me, your teacher and have unlawfully acquired this knowledge. So, it shall not serve when you

you most need it, when you fight with your equal. The astra will never stay permanently with any other than a brahmana. This is no place for a speaker of untruth. Yet, it shall not go for naught that you have served me; you will not find a kshatriya that could take his place by your side". And Karna went away from mount Mahendra and the presence of Rama a sadder and a wiser man.—*M. B. Santi-parva 3.*

The following is a brief account of the greatness and exploits of Parasurama :—Rama, son of Jamadagni, was of unique might and valour. Arjuna Kartaveerya, of the line of the Haihayas, the foremost kshatriya of the time, met his death at the hands of Rama, because he committed a grievous sin. Rama destroyed the sacrifice of Jambha the asura, slew the priests that conducted it and shattered his head to pieces. Sata-dundubhi, another famous asura, owed his death to Rama. Six hundred and forty thousand kshatriya warriors were slaughtered by Rama on the banks of the Sarasvati ; and further, the contingent of fourteen thousand veterans who hated the brahmanas ; and their champion Rama stayed not his hand until thousands fell beneath his arrows ; thousand fell a prey to his sword and his terrible club dashed out the brains of thousands. The brahmanas were cruelly oppressed and tortured by the fierce kshatriyas and cried out in piteous tones to Rama to avenge their death; and their champion and avenger did his work only too well; for hundreds and thousands and lakhs of kshatriyas, old and young, the babe in the womb, the child at the breast, none were spared. ‘Rama ! come to us’ cried the poor brahmanas “and deliver us from our torments.” And there was a terrible response to the appeal ; the broad earth almost sank beneath the load of the corpses of the kshatriyas, Kasmirsas, Daradas, Kuntis, Kshudrakas, Malwas, Sakas, Chhedees,

Kasis, Karusas, Rishikas, Vidarbhas, Angas, Vangas, Kalingas, Magadhas, Kasi-kosalas, Ratrayanas, Veetihotras, Kira-tas, Martikavatas and many others too numerous to mention. Lakes of blood were made by him and his ancestors were offered huge libations of blood. Rama brought the eighteen islands under his sway ; he performed countless Aswamedhas and Naramedhas and in the end made over the broad Earth in gift to Rishi Kasyapa. There is a contemporary saying about Rama which runs as follows :—Kasyapa received from Rama, the son of Jamadagni, an altar of solid gold, eighteen feet long and about a man's height. Rama fought for a hundred years with Soubha the king of the Salvas. Then young maidens looked at his magnificent form and wonderful strength and said, "Rama ! It is not destined that the wicked Soubha shall meet his fate at your hands. You may as well throw away your mighty weapons. The Lord will come down ages hence as Sree Krishna, and with Pradyumna and Samba, he will rid the earth of this tyrant." Rama heard it and seeing into the future, cast aside his weapons, gave up the world and its concerns and be-took himself to glorious tapas. He placed within the waters his war-chariot, weapons, bows, arrows and axe and practised severe austerities. So, Soubha escaped from Parasurama, not because the latter was unequal to the task, but because it was reserved by the Lords of Karma for a later incarnation, even this very Krishna that is with us now. It is he that infused his might into Rama and performed those wonderful and terrible acts.—*M. B. Sabha-parva* 49.

Parasurama came to the swayamvara hall after the bow was broken and had his colloquy with Rama there—*Tulsi Das Ramayana* I.

Saundatti, Chief town of Parasgarh sub-division of Belgaum district, Bombay presidency ; 41 miles east by south of Belgaum town and about 24 miles from Dharwar

station on the Southern Mahratta Railway. About 2 miles due east of Saundatti are the ruins of an extensive hill fort called Parasgarh, from which the whole sub-division derives its name. About $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles north-west of Saundatti a large fair in honour of the goddess Yellamma is held twice a year about the full moon in January and in November and December. On each occasion from 15,000 to 20,000 persons attend.

According to local popular belief, the Goddess Yellamma was the wife of a sage who had three sons. One day, enraged at the disobedience of his wife, he ordered his sons to kill her. The youngest boy obeyed, saying that it was his duty to obey his father. At the request of the dutious youth, however, the sage brought Yellamma to life again, but hated her still. To regain his favour she served him for three years without food. This appeased the sage, and she was received back into favour.

There is a *dharmasala* at Saundatti, also a Government bungalow above an old temple in a well-preserved fort which overlooks the town. Dharwar is 321 miles from Poona.

Athirala :—Shrine on the Cheyar river, in Cuddappah district, Madras presidency. The sanctity of this spot centres in the pond attached to the temple, the waters of which are said to cleanse from the most heinous crimes, as illustrated by the purification of Parasu Ram (one of the incarnations of Vishnu) from the sin of matricide. The festival of Sivaratri, held here for three days in the middle of February, attracts many thousands of pilgrims from Cuddapah, North Arcot, and Nellore districts. The temple has an endowment of £383 per annum.

Nearest Railway stations for this place are Nandalur and Razampetta on the Madras Railway. Distance of these stations from Madras 137 and 130 miles.—*Traveller's Companion*.

5. *The Asuras of the Three Cities* :—

Stories about the three castles of the Asuras are found in the Aitareya Brahmana I, 23 and 25 ; the Taitt. Sam. VI. 2, 3 and the Satapatha Brahmana III, 4,4,3. The Aitareya Brahmana is to the following effect :—

The devas and asuras were jealous of each other and fought. The asuras made the earth an iron castle or town (*ayasmayi-puh*), the antariksha or middle region a silver castle (*rajata*), and the sky a golden castle (*harini*). In opposition to these strongholds of the asuras, the devas made out of the earth the *sadas*, or the sacrificial sitting room; out of the mid-region the *agnidhra* or the fire-place; out of the sky the two *havirdhanas* or repositories for the *havish* offerings ; and by performing one after another the three *upasads* or rites so called (the word has also the meaning of besieging), they drove out the asuras from their three castles successively. The *upasad* rites besides, became to the devas an arrow with Agni as its *anikam* shaft, soma its *salya* steel, Vishnu as its *tejanam* point, and Varuna as its *parnani* feathers. For discharging this arrow the *a j y a* or the offering of clarified butter thrown into the fire became a bow.

The Taitt. Samhita omits Varuna from the arrow. The Satapatha. Brahmana also omits Varuna, but it says that the weapon was *vajra*, thunder bolt, with Agni, Soma and Vishnu as shaft, iron and point. The Taitt. Samhita adds that after preparing the arrow, the devas asked Rudra to shoot saying ‘ Rudra is *k r u r a* cruel, let him shoot’. He said ‘Let me ask a boon ; let me be the lord of *pasus* cattle’. Hence, it is said, Rudra is the lord of cattle ; he discharged the arrow, and having pierced the three castles, and drove the asuras from these worlds,

Muir quotes the text of the Vajasaneyi Sam, 5, 8 which speaks of Agni’s *tanuh* or spiritual body thus :—

"The body of thine, Agni, which reposes in iron, *ayah sayah*; which reposes in silver, *rajahsayah*; which reposes in gold *harisayah*." Thus the three castles wrested from the asuras seem to have become the abodes of Agni.

He also quotes Atharva Veda V. 29, 9 which speaks of the three castles of iron, silver and gold as Devapurās, the castles of the gods ; also *ib.* X. 6, 10 which says "Holding that *mani* gem, the moon captured the golden castles of the asuras *alias danavas*" ; and verse 20 of the same hymn which says : "Allied with them (the Atharvans) the Angirases shattered the castles of the dasyus ; with it do thou slay thine enemies."—*Indo Aryan Mythology. Part I*, pp. 376, 377.

The gods and demons were engaged in warfare.

The evil demons, like to mighty kings,
Made these worlds castles ; then they formed the earth
Into an iron citadel, the air
Into a silver fortress, and the sky
Into a fort of gold. Whereat the gods
Said to each other, 'Frame we other worlds
In opposition to these fortresses.'
Then they constructed sacrificial places,
Where they performed a triple burnt oblation.
By the first sacrifice, they drove the demons
Out of their earthly fortress, by the second
Out of the air, and by the third oblation
Out of the sky. Thus were the evil spirits
Chased by the gods in triumph from the worlds.

—Aitareya Brahmana I. 23.

Bana was the king of the Three Cities. The Rishis groaned under his oppressive rule and sought refuge with Sankara. He sent for Narada and said to him "Go to the Three Cities and instruct the women therein in such knowledge as goes against the wisdom of the holy scrip-

tures. That will quench their spiritual lustre, where by the Three Cities live and flourish." Narada only did his work too well ; and Anaupamya, the queen of Bana, was fully primed with heretic doctrines and practices. Meanwhile Sankara spent thousands of years on the banks of the Narmada, preparing his weapons and waiting for the psychological moment. When the Three Cities came together, he burnt them with his arrow. Then said Bana to himself " Strange ! None but Sankara can foil me" ; and he placed the Linga of his favourite deity before him and offered devout worship to it. Siva came to him and said consolingly " Child ! Fear not. You and yours shall dwell happily in the golden city. The other two were thrown down on the mount Srisaila and Amarakantak.—*Padmapurana, Adikhanda XIV, 15.*

AMARAKANTAK.

Hill in Rewa State, Baghelkhand, Central Provinces.
Height above sea-level 3493 feet.

Amarakantak is one of the most holy places to Hindus. It is said that Vishnu destroyed a *rakshas* or demon who lived in three castles of metals, one within the other, under the protection of Brahma, the Creator. Amarakantak is also the birthplace of Kalidas, author of the famous poem of Meghadut. A fair is held here on the occasion of Maha Sivaratri festival; fairs are also held when the solar or lunar eclipse occurs. Thousands of pilgrims travel to bathe in the holy river on these occasions.

There are five *kunds* or pools and some interesting temples on this hill, all of which are considered sacred, being at the source of the holy river Narmada.

Bullock carts, ponies and doolies can be had at the Pendra Road station on the Bengal-Nagpur Railway. Carts can go as far as the foot and ponies and doolies to the

top of the hill. There is a dharmasala for pilgrims at Amarakantak,—*Traveller's Companion*, p. 14.

Formerly the mighty asuras had three cities in heaven ; one was made of gold, another of silver and a third of iron, each of them excellent and large. Kamalaksha, Tarakaksha, and Vidyunmali were the respective rulers thereof. Indra did his very best to capture the cities, but in vain. He then repaired with his gods to mount Kailasa and prayed Sankara to help him. The Lord, moved by the desire of doing good to the worlds and seeing that the time was come for the Three Asuras to cease to live, granted their prayer. The mountains Gandhamadana and Vindhya were the two bamboo poles of his car ; the Earth, with its oceans and forests, was his chariot ; the serpent Sesha was the axle ; the Sun and the Moon were the wheels ; the serpents Elapatra and Pushpadanta were the lynch-pins ; mount Malaya was the yoke ; the great serpent Takshaka was the cord that fastened the yoke to the poles ; the other creatures around him were the girth-ropes ; the four Vedas were the steeds and the Vedangas the bridle-bits ; the Gayatri and the Savitri were the reins and the Pranava was the whip ; Brahma was the charioteer ; the mountain Mandara formed the bow and Vasuki, its string ; Vishnu was the arrow, fire the arrow-head and Vayu the wings of the shaft ; Yama the god of Death was the feathers in its tail and the lightning the whet-stone ; mount Meru was the standard of the car. Thus equipped, Sankara set out to destroy the Three Cities. He formed an excellent and unparalleled array named after him, and stood unmoved for a thousand years. When the Three Cities came together on the firmament, he pierced them with his three shafts that were each of three joints (Vishnu, Vayu and Yama were the joints ; Garhapatya, Dakshina and the Ahavaneeya fires were the three shafts) The danavas could not bear to look at the blazing cities

nor at the resplendent arrow formed of Vishnu, Soma and the Fire of Dissolution. Uma, the consort of Siva, came over to see the cities burn.—*M.B. Dronaparva* 203.

When the daityas were worsted in the Tarakamaya war by the gods, they sought shelter in the nether worlds in deep despair. Then, the three sons of Taraka, the asura—Tarakaksha, Kamalaksha and Vidyummali—engaged themselves in terrible austerities to obtain from Brahma the boon of eternal life. "Nay" said Brahma, "that is not for you, nor for me. Choose some other likelier boon." Then they consulted together and said to him "Fashion for us three magnificent cities to live in, furnished with every thing that the heart could desire. It shall not be approached by yakshas, rakshasas, uragas or any other beings; no weapons, nor curses, nor artificial elementals shall have power over it. Let us dwell happily therein and range the worlds at our will. We shall come together once in many thousands of years. And may the Lord of all consume them then with a single arrow. Let us meet our fate at his hands and at no other's." Brahma granted them their wishes. Maya, the architect of the gods and the asuras, fashioned by the might of his tapas three splendid cities, the first of gold, the second of silver, and the third of black iron, every one of which was one hundred yojanas square. Countless myriads of daityas and danavas gathered round them, haughty, fierce and cruel. Maya created for them every thing that they could desire. Later on, Hari, the son of Tarakaksha, performed austere tapas and obtained from Brahma a wonderful boon. There was in his city a well named Mritisanjeevini. Such of the asuras as were wounded or killed in battle were thrown into it and came out whole, stronger, fiercer and more powerful for evil. They were never defeated in battle; to one who was killed in battle, ten were brought into being. Pride and

strength turned their heads quite; the cities of the mortals, the hermitages of the holy rishis, and the abodes of the Shining Ones escaped not their ravages. Law and order, virtue and righteousness were being gradually strangled to death.....The gods, every one of them, placed in Rudra, one half of their energy for the destruction of the asuras. The Three Cities were ever coursing in Swarloka, Bhuvarloka and Bhooloka respectively.....

The car sank into the earth under the unprecedented weight of Brahma, Rudra, Vishnu, Soma and Agni, as also the bow of Siva. Thereat, Narayana emerged from the arrow and brought up the car, assuming the form of a bull. Siva infused the Pasupatastra into the arrow.—*M. B. Karna-parva 24—27. Anusasana parva 116.*

When the cities and the Asuras therein had been destroyed, Maya, the asura, threw the slain into the well of Immortality ; and they came out stronger and fiercer than ever. Siva was at his wit's end ; when Vishnu saved the situation by transforming himself into a cow with Brahma as his calf. They proceeded to the well and drank it dry. The asuras saw it, but, the illusory power of Vishnu was strong on them, and, they could not lift a finger to avert their ruin. Then, Maya, the yogi, said to those that guarded the well “Verily, Fate is almighty and its decrees are unchangeable, with gods or asuras or self or others. Behold ! this Vishnu comes to the help of Siva with all his powers.” Then, Sankara armed himself for the last fight; he got up the war chariot, set the dreadful shaft to the bow and, protected by the energy of Vishnu, destroyed the three cities again in the auspicious Abhijit Muhoorta—*Bh. VII. 10.*

13. *The other:*—Maya fashioned two bows; the one was taken by Siva and the other by Vishnu. The latter handed over his bow to Rishi Richeeka; and from him Jamadagni got it and handed it down to Parasurama.—*Kamba Ramayana*

23. *Stood*:—On this Govindaraja makes the following comment:—We should not infer that the gods were biased towards Vishnu and prejudiced against Siva; for, they were endowed with the open Eye which saw far into the heart of things that were beyond the range of human knowledge. Hence, the Vedic text “Rudra alone was; and there was no second,” means that he was higher than the others below him and no more. But, the other text “ Narayana alone was,” makes it plain that Vishnu is the Absolute and no other. Some set up the defence that Rudra might have been worsted by the excess of tamasic guna in him, which surely is no disgrace to him. But, the defence carries its condemnation on its surface; for, the very predominance of the tamasa guna is itself a sure indication of the inferiority of Siva to Vishnu. It is absurd to object that Rama and Lakshmana were defeated and bound by Indrajit ; for, they but observed the kshatriya etiquette in battle that does not allow an invisible foe to be shot at by the arrow named Sabdavedhana (locating a hidden enemy by any sound he makes). Dasaratha, who violated the rule, was dreadfully punished by the rishi's curse which deprived him of the presence of his favourite son in his last moments. So, Rama, who came down on earth to exemplify law and order in his life, would not slay Indrajit by the means open to him. And it is no disgrace to him. But, Rudra was defeated, not on account of any excess of the tamoguna in him, but simply and naturally, on account of his inferiority of energy. If it were otherwise, the gods would have known of it and made proper allowance for it.

Now, it seems to me that the commentator was unbalanced by his fanatic devotion to Vishnu and by his intense pertinacity to establish His absoluteness. But, of a truth, there is not the slightest distinction or difference

between the members of the Trimoorti—Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. The various episodes we come across of their praying to one another, of getting boons from one another and of defeating one another, are but simply so many acts in the great drama of the universe, with special reference to time and circumstances. This view of their oneness is amply supported by numerous passages in the Puranas. Other passages that appear to teach a different view are to be rationally understood to mean, that it is good for each one of us to set before himself as his ideal any one of the numerous aspects of God and try to rise up to it by meditation and practice. This could be best done if we confine our attention to it and to it alone and regard it as the highest goal. It was never the purpose of our wise rishis that each one of us should enlist himself under the banners of the members of the Trimoorti and fight it out with the others, tooth and nail. We see in life that the same person exercises many functions ; each has a different locality, a different name given to it and a different insignia of office; but, nobody takes the official to be distinct and conflicting in his numerous capacities. Brahman, the Absolute, assumes different aspects in relation to the evolution, preservation and involution of the universe. How could there be any difference or conflict among them, even the slightest?

The above incident between Vishnu and Siva seems to have occurred at the end of the sacrifice of Daksha. The bow broken by Rama was the one used by Siva on the occasion of his destroying the Three Cities; so, the mention of mount Meru as the bow is to be taken as describing the same event when it took place in other kalpas. The apparently conflicting versions that, at the end of the Daksha yagna, Rudra gave his bow to the devas ; that he gave it to Devarata ; that the devas gave it to Janaka (as narrated

by the sages in the asrama of Visvamitra) ; and that Varuna gave it to Janaka (as related by Seetha to Anasooya); are to be reconciled by assuming that the bow was fashioned by Visvakarma for the devas to be used by Sankara to destroy the Tripurasuras; that at the end of the Daksha yagna, Vishnu deprived it of energy ; that at the request of the devas, Rudra gave it to Devarata ; and that later on the gods asked Varuna to make it over to Janaka to be used by him.

212. 2. *King Arjuna* :—

Purooravas	
Ayus	Netra
Nahusha	Kunti
Yayati	Sobhanji
Yadu	Mahishman
Sahasrajit	Bhadrasenaka
Satajit	Dhanika
Haihaya	Kritaveerya
Dharma	Arjuna

(*Bh. IX. 23*).

Dasasva, the tenth of the hundred sons of Ikshvaku, ruled at Mahishmati. Duryodhana, a king of his line, was beloved by the goddess of the river Narmada and bore him a daughter named Sudarsana. The Lord of Fire fell in love with her, and obtained her in marriage from her father, promising him to remain for ever at Mahishmati and defend it from enemies.—*M. B. Anusasana-parva*, 2. But, the *Sabha parva*. 32., relates that it was the daughter of king Neela that became the wife of Agni ; and that he fought with Sahadeva, the Pandava, during his digvijaya.

Arjuna chose Dattatreya, an incarnation of Vishnu, as his guru and served him devotedly and well. The sage desired him to choose four boons except that of immunity from death. Arjuna prayed that he might be wealthy, high-minded, strong, truthful, free from envy and endowed with thousand arms ; that he should rule, in all virtue, over the animate and the inanimate creation; that he should win over the gods, the sages, the fathers and the brahmanas by splendid sacrifices and the enemies by keen shafts; that he should meet his death at the hands of a person, the like of whom never was, never is and never will be. He was invincible in fight and ruled over Mahishmati for eighty-five thousand years. He brought under his rule, the earth and the islands of Indra, Kacheru, Kama, Gabhastimat, Gandharva, Varuna and Sanhrishta. It was a wonderful sight, when he walked over the waters of the ocean without wetting his clothes. There was none like him before or after. He divided himself into four and in one of his aspects, commanded his armies; in the second, he abode in his capital; in the third, he was present among his people and spared no pains to win their affection ; and in his fourth, he conducted sacrifices one after another. The gates of his palace and town were ever open.—*M. B. Sabha-parva* 48.

By the favour of Dattatreya, he obtained a golden car capable of coursing where he liked. Arjuna used his unequalled might to oppress the devas, the yakshas, the rishis and other beings. They carried their complaints to Lord Vishnu who promised Indra that he will raise up some one to destroy the haughty monarch.—*M.B. Aranya-parva*. 116.

Arjuna made a gift of the earth and the seven islands around it to the brahmanas who officiated at his aswamedha. The god of Fire requested him to furnish food for his ravening hunger; countless towns, villages, hamlets, cow-pens and

countries were given him to feed upon. But, the God, relying on the help of the invincible Arjuna, resolved to consume the entire earth with its mountain and rivers. On his way, he came across the holy hermitage of the rishi Vasishtha and reduced it to ashes. Whereat, Vasishtha grew wroth and said, "Arjuna! You did not ask Agni to spare this asrama of mine ; in consequence, Rama, son of Jamadagni, will hew down your thousand arms in battle." Arjuna received the curse with perfect serenity.—*Ib. Santi-parva* 48.

One of the boons he obtained was that, if he should ever go wrong, good people should correct or punish him. Then, elated by his boons, he declared that there was none equal to him; the brahmanas depended upon the kshatriyas for their livelihood, and should naturally take a lower place in the social scale. Thereat, Vayu, the messenger of the gods, warns him not to do so and narrates the mighty doings of Kasyapa, Uchathya, Vasishtha, Atri, Chyavana, and other brahmanas. Arjuna is convinced of his error and ever after, is a respecter of the brahmanas.—*Ib. Anusasana-parva* 257.

The sun-god gave Arjuna certain astras to dry up the waters of the ocean ; but, he destroyed the asrama of Vasishtha instead. He imprisoned Ravana, the Lord of Lanka, but he released him at the intercession of the rishi Pulastya, the Progenitor of the rakshasas.—*V. R. VII. 31—33 ; Harivamsa 33.*

The *Vachaspatya* under the word Kartaveeryadeepa, meaning the act of making a donation of lamps, having Arjuna Karthaveerya as the object of worship by means of that act, quotes largely from the work called *Vidhanaparijata*, and a long verse at the end, in which it is stated that Arjuna was an incarnation of the chakra of Vishnu.

A commentary on Amara with Telugu meanings printed at Madras in 1861, says that the river Bahuda is so-called because she gave shoulders to Rishi Likhita, when he bathed in her, and also because she was brought down to the earth by Kartaveerya Arjuna who was Bahuda (one who gave largely)—*Indo Aryan Mythology, Part. I*, p. 360.

Professor Max Muller (History of Sanscrit Literature, p. 487) says “Margaveya is a difficult name. It may be simply, as Sayana says, the son of his mother Mrigu ; but, Mrigu may be a variety of Bhrigu and thus confirm Lassen’s conjecture that this Rama is Rama, the son of Jamadagni, of the race of Bhrigu, commonly called Parasurama.”

In the Aitareya Brahmana (VII, 27-30,) Rama Margaveya is mentioned in connexion with the substitute of the Soma which the kshatriya is competent to drink in his Rajasooya sacrifice :—

King Visvantara, son of Susadman, commenced a Vi-Syaparna sacrifice (*i. e.*, a sacrifice without his brahma priests of the family called Syaparnas), having resolved to interdict them from it. Knowing this, the Syaparnas went to the sacrifice (of their own accord) and seated themselves in the Antar-vedi (the place occupied by the priests and sacrificers only). Seeing them, he (Visvantara) said (to his men). “The Syaparnas are the doers of evil deeds and the defamers of the pure. They have got into my Antar-vedi. Do ye turn them out.” Accordingly they were made to get out, but when they were being turned out, they bawled out (*ruruvire*) ; “Those (brahmanas called) Asitamrigas (of the Kasyapa clan) who conquered the Soma-drink for the Kasyapas from the (brahmanas called) Bhutaviras in (King) Janamejaya Praikshita’s Vi-Kasyapa sacrifice (*i.e.*, a sacrifice in which he had engaged the Bhutaviras as the priests to the exclusion of his own priests, the Kasyapas), with those (Asitamrigas) they (the Kasyapas)

were indeed heroic (*viravatah*). Who is he among us the hero (*virah*) that can conquer this Soma-drink (for us)?" Rama Margaveya said : "Here I am the hero." Rama Margaveya was an *anuchana* or well-read student belonging to the Syaparnas, and when they were getting out, he said (to the king) : "Will (thy men), O Rajan, turn out from the *vedi* even one who is *itthamvid*, the knower of what to do?" (The king answered) ; "Who ever thou art, O Brahmabandhu, (Brahmabandhu, literally the kinsman of brahmanas, is a vile epithet signifying one who, as Sayana explains, is Brahmanadhma, the meanest of brahmanas. It may be compared to the epithet Brahma-nabruva, a nominal brahman), how dost thou know?" The substance of Rama's reply is this: "The gods excluded Indra from the Soma-drink because he killed Tvashtri's son Visvarupa and Vritra, caused Yatis to be eaten by wolves, killed the Arurmaghas, and rebuked Brihaspati (the priest of the gods). When Indra (the head of the kshatriyas) was thus excluded, all the kshatram class became excluded from the Soma drink, and although Indra got over the exclusion by forcibly taking or stealing (*a-mushya*) the Soma from Tvashtri, the kshatram class still remains excluded'. He who knows the (sacred) *bhaksha*, food, with which he can (spiritually) enrich the excluded kshatram class, how even he is being turned out from the *Vedi*!" The king asks : "Dost thou know, O Brahmana! that food?" "Yes, I know," "Tell it, O Brahmana, to us." Then comes a long speech by Rama from which the king learns that the kshatriya's Soma consists in the juice squeezed out from "the airy descending roots of the Nyagrodha tree, together with the fruits of the Uduumba, Asvattha, and Plaksha trees."—*Ibid*, pp. 364, 365.

Kasyapa expels Rama to mount Mahendra according to one account or to Soorparaka according to another; and

there the sea makes bare new land for Rama. Mount Mahendra seems to be on or near the Bay of Bengal seacoast of the Kalinga country, while Soorparaka was probably a sea-port town of Guzarat or Konkan.—*Ibid.* p. 374.

The chakra of Vishnu is called Sahasradhara or Sahasrara, having a thousand spokes ; that may have been the reason why Arjuna having a thousand shoulders, was fancied to have been its incarnation. *V. P. I.* 22 verse 71 takes Vishnu's chakra to represent mind—*Ibid.* p. 375.

23. *Chance* :— “ If you fail to string this bow ” said Rama of the Axe “ I will slay you and yours to the last man.”—*Adhy. R. I.* 7.

213. 14, *Took* :—And along with it, the Vaishnava energy that was infused into him for a purpose.—*Padmapurana*.

214. 9 *Drained* :—Then, the energy of Vishnu came out of Parasurama and was seen by the gods to enter into Rama.—*Narasimha-purana*.

25. *Shall destroy* :—He gave permission to Rama's shaft to destroy the merit of his yagnas.—*Padmapurana*. This proves that Rama is the Absolute, since he has the power to give or to take away the high worlds of bliss.—*Go.*

“ You are one of the manifestations of the energy of Brahman ; and as such, this arrow cannot harm you,” said Rama and was about to discharge the shaft, when Parasurama said “ I prefer that you destroy with this arrow the asura named Atula who hast assumed the form of certain high worlds ; I have won them by my tapas, and for certain purposes of mine, have accepted them.” Rama did so, and the son of Jamadagni exclaimed “ Now, the world knows you as the Supreme Narayana”; he went round him in reverence and was absorbed into him. Later on, Parasurama was seen taking his way to mount Mahendra. The gods who were witnesses of this scene said to themselves, “ This

is but got up for our benefit. The two manifestations of Vishnu are disporting themselves at our expense."—*San-graha Ramayana* I. 8.

34. *Disgrace*:—This shows that Parasurama was but an amsha of Vishnu and that Rama was the perfect avatara. This talk between the two was to throw light on the real nature of Rama in the minds of those that were present and that Rama might take back to himself, the various manifestations of his energy that had been previously placed in others. His wanderings, among the hermitages of the Rishis later on, was for the same purpose, that he might have his full complement of power when he went to fight the Rakshasas. The devas who were eagerly looking forward to the moment of Ravana's downfall, would naturally be present on this occasion and rejoice that one more step was taken in the work of their deliverance.

215. 2. *Taking my way*:—"My tapas has freed me from the evil and your arrow from the good results of my karma ; hereafter, I am a Jivanmukta." So, it was by Parasurama's request that he was apparently defeated and punished.

2. *Mahendra* :— is in the Kalinga country, probably near point Palmyras. The whole of Malabar is at present called the land of Parasurama ; it was given him by the ocean to reside in. He got down brahmanas from the north to inhabit it.

6. *Went round* :—Rama reverenced Parasurama as a brahmana ; the latter recognised Rama as his Antaryamin or Inner Ruler and went round him; but, he did not bow in salutation as he was a brahmana and Rama was in a kshatriya body.

216. 3. *Varuna* :—Dasaratha and those that stood around could not see or hear Parasurama praise Sreerama as the Absolute, nor saw the latter hand over the bow to

Varuna. The weapons of the devas should ever be in their custody and Varuna was their keeper.—*Go.*

When the Pandavas were making their last journey (*mahaprasthana*) towards mount Meru, Agni, the god of fire, met them on their way in the shape of a man and said to them “I am Agni. I am he that burnt the Khandava forest, with the help of Arjuna and Narayana. Let Arjuna here lay down his bow Gandeeva and go with you, for, he has no use for it any more. The bright chakra that graced the hand of Krishna has gone back to its Lord in Vaikuntha and will come down, when He takes his next avatara. This bow Gandeeva was got by me for Partha from Varuna and let it be given back to the God.” Then Arjuna threw into the waters his terrible bow and the two quivers ever full ; and Agni vanished where he stood.—*M. B. Mahaprasthanika-parva I.*

The following lines from Tennyson’s *Morte D’ Arthur* offer a very interesting parallel.

“Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride; for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I row’d across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king :
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known :
But now delay not : take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere :
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.”

* * * * *

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch’d the sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
 Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,
 And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
 Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
 Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
 By night, with noises of the northern sea.
 So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur :
 But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
 And caught him by the hilt, and brandished him
 Three times and drew him under in the mere.
 And lightly went the other to the King.
 Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath :
 "Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
 Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen "
 And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
 "Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
 Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
 Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
 Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
 So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
 Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him ;
 But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
 That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
 Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

217. 15. *Temples* :—Women are allowed to offer worship to the temples and not the gods therein.

18. *Blessing* :—Kunti, the mother of the Pandavas pronounced the following blessing over Draupadi on the occasion of her marriage. “ May you delight in the love of your husbands like Indra and Indrani, Agni and Svaha, Chandra and Rohini, Nala and Damayanti, Vaisravana and Bhadra, Vasishtha and Arundati, Narayana

and Lakshmi. Bring forth mighty heroes and long-lived. May all the joys of this world be yours. May you ever take the initiatory vow as often as your husbands celebrate sacrifices. Be thou a model chastity and wifely devotion. May your days and night be ever taken up in entertaining guests, good men, children, the aged and the venerable. When your husbands conquer this earth and perform an aswamedha, may you make a gift of it to the brahmanas. May the brightest gems from the earth shine on you. May your days be long on earth. It makes my heart glad to see you thus today, a lovely bride, attired in red silk; may I soon behold thee, the mother of heroes, to continue our line on earth."—*M. B. Adi-parva* 216.

219. 10. *Lakshmi* :—The mystery of the eternal union of the Primeaval Pair is hinted at, here.

APPENDIX A.

The Kalpanṭara Ramayana.

One day Rama was sitting on his throne of state and a venerable brahmana was holding forth to the assembled multitudes on the heroic achievements of Rama. "It is generally understood that Kumbhakarna was killed before Ravana; but, it is not correct." (This brahmana was no other than Mahadeva in disguise). Now, Jambavan, the hoary Nestor of the monkey world, folded his hands and said "Lord Raghava! This brahmana is right; I have heard your history narrated that way when you came down as Sree-Rama in a former kalpa." Thereupon Rama gave expression to the request of all there to have the Ramayana of a former kalpa narrated in brief.

In old times, King Dasaratha besieged the city Sumanasā. Its king Sadhya fought bravely for over a month, but was defeated and made prisoner. His son Bhooshana took his father's place and came out to fight with Dasaratha. His youth and beauty fascinated the king, whose heart cried out "Alas! I can never find it in my heart to take the life of such a fair boy. His parents, whose joy he is, what untold agony must they experience! And his girl wife would weep herself to death! If my darling boy had but escaped the fangs of the terrible bear that was his Fate, he would be exactly of the same age and of the same beauty, strength, grace and valour." So, he fought with him for a while all gently and by a skilful movement took him prisoner. Thereafter, he made great friends with the father and the son and remained with them for over a month, an honor'd guest. He could never bear to have the boy out of his sight. One day he turned to King Sadhya and said, "How did you ever come to be the father of such a perfect son?"; and Sadhya taught him the mantra and the rites which secured to him the envied result.

Dasaratha went back to Ayodhya, and had the Putreshti performed for him by the rishis. At its close there arose from the Ahavaneeya fire the Lord Vishnu and asked the king to choose any boon he would like from him. The childless king replied "May I be the father of four princes, long-lived, righteous, and guardians of the worlds." "Be it so," said the Lord. But, his queen said "If the Lord is gracious unto us, may He himself be born as my son." Her prayer was granted and Vishnu infused His essence into the consecrated food that was prepared during the sacrifice. And in course of time, Rama, Lakshmana Bharata and Satrughna were born to Kausalya, Sumitra, Suroopa and Suvesha respectively. Brahma came to Ayodhya and performed the necessary sacraments for the princes.

One day a Brahmarakshasa obsessed Rama who fainted in consequence. The boys who were playing with him carried the news to the agonised father, who ran to Vasishtha and sought his help and council. The sage threw upon Rama's body highly-magnetised holy ashes, when the Brahmarakshasa spoke through Rama and said "Holy sir ! I was once a brahmana proud of my vedic lore. I never had enough of despoiling others of their wealth and in consequence, I am doomed to this horrible existence. Show me a way to free myself from it." Said Vasishtha "You will continue to live on as a rakshasa one hundred years more. You will then bathe in the holy Ganga, worship Mahadeva with hundred leaves of the Bilva and bathe again. You will be freed of your sin and I will be there to raise you to the worlds of light. Go." And it all fell out even as Vasishtha foretold.

When they were of age to marry, Dasaratha sent messengers north and south, east and west to all the kings of the earth to send him the portraits of their daughters. One

of them returned and said, "Videha, king of the Vidarbhas, has a daughter of matchless beauty ; she comes not of mortal woman, but from the sacrificial fire. King Janaka would consider himself highly honored by an alliance with you." Dasaratha took counsel with his priests and ministers and went over to the capital of Janaka. But an unexpected difficulty confronted the father of Seetha. He had proclaimed a swayamvara for his daughter, a competition opened to all. How could he manage to give his daughter as wife to Rama ? He got up at midnight and prayed fervently to Sankara and said "Lord ! I wish to give my daughter in marriage to Rama ; but some one mightier than he may take away Seetha. Then, I would not have kept my word and it is no light sin. Dasaratha cannot defeat and destroy all the kings of the earth combined. And if Rama should meet his death at the hands of the other kings, what a horrible fate it would be for my daughter ? Well, my earnest prayer is that you bring it about anyhow that Rama marries my girl." "I will even do so" replied Mahadeva "Here take this bow and proclaim to the assembled suitors that you have promised to give your daughter in marriage to him who would string the bow." He vanished where he stood and Janaka carried out his orders to the very letter.

Ulvala, rejoicing in the strength of a hundred thousand elephants, managed with extreme difficulty to raise the terrible bow with both of his hands knee-high. His uncle Mareecha heard of it and came to Janaka in the guise of a brahmana. He was honourably entertained and when he was at his meals, Seetha chanced to come there. Mareechaa was dumb-founded at her inconceivable beauty and went back, his heart filled with hopeless despair. Then came there Indra and the gods. Indra managed to lift it up, but could not bend it ; Soorya fell down in a faint when he was

trying to string it ; Vayu succeeded in bending it a little, but was thrown far by the recoil ; the huge bow fell upon him and all the gods clapped their hands in high glee. Then the asura Bana came there with Prahlada and numerous daityas. He bent the bow to the length of two finger-breadths. Prahlada and Bali did not compete ; the rakshasas were silent ; the mighty kings of the earth left the place after fruitless attempts to negotiate the bow. Then, the brahmanas tackled it. Visvamitra bent it to about the length of an inch; the others wisely refrained. Lastly came Rama with his arm gracefully thrown over the shoulders of Lakshmana. He touched the bow, saluted it and went round it in reverence ; then, he essayed to lift it. Then, there began a clapping of hands and much senseless laughter, while some cried out "Ho, ho ! verily we are in mortal danger of being deprived of our honour and lives by this boy-hero." But Rama minded them not ; he set up the bow and playfully strung it with one hand. The vast assemblage gazed in open mouthed wonder. Then, Rama drew the bow string to his ear and let go. The twang was so tremendous that the huge hall resembled a waving field of tall corn over which a sudden blast had passed. Janaka gave Seetha as wife to Rama. The hero put to rout the craven kings gathered there and took his bride to Ayodhya.—*Padmapurana* ; *Patalakhanda*, 112.

The events of the Ramayana are narrated once again in the above purana *Uttarakanda* 269. I note below only where it differs from the Ramayana of Valmeeki :—

1. Manu Swayambhuva spent a thousand years on the banks of the Gomati, praying to Lord Vishnu and repeating the twelve-lettered Mantra. The Lord granted him his prayer to be born thrice as son to him. He was first Rama the son of Dasaratha and Kausalya ; then Krishna the son of Vasudeva and Devaki ; and lastly he will be Kalki

son of Harigupta, the brahmana and Devaprabha, his wife.

2. Sumitra was the daughter of the king of Magadha.
 3. Dasaratha performed a Vaishnava yaga in honour of the Lord. From the sacrificial fire rose Vasudeva and Lakshmi, and asked the king to choose a boon of them. "I desire" said Dasaratha "to have you as my son". Vishnu assented to it and taking a vessel full of *payasa* from the hands of Lakshmi gave it to the king. "Give this to your wives and they will bring forth sons in whom my essence and energy will manifest." Dasaratha distributed it between Kausalya and Kaikeyi who were there. Later on came Sumitra and was given a half of the other two.

4. Rama was born with four arms ; the gem Kaus-tubha, the mole Sreevatsa, and the garland Vanamala graced his breast ; from his breath emanated all knowledge and wisdom ; the fourteen worlds were located in his face, the oceans and mountains about his middle, Brahma and Siva in his navel, the quarters in his ears, Agni and Soorya in his eyes and Vayu in his nostrils.

5. He showed himself to them as the Virat Purusha, in whose kosmic mind lies the universe. Kausalya was overcome with great fear and threw herself at his feet crying "Lord! I have got you as my son, and thereby have realised my utmost wishes. I pray you to put away this divine form of yours and remain with me as a man among men".

6. Tataka was slain by Rama and went to Vaikuntha in a glorious body.

7. The sacrifice performed by Janaka was Vajapeya.
From the play Janaki-parinaya :—

Visvamitra came to know that Ravana wanted to marry Seetha, but resolved that none but Rama should have her wife. He got down Janaka and his daughters to his as-

rama to be present at a sacrifice that he was to perform ; and went to Ayodhya for Rama. Suka, the spy of Ravana, told him of this ; and Ravana and Sarana, his minister, transformed themselves into Rama and Lakshmana and proceeded to Visvamitra's *asrama*, fully aware that Seetha was deeply in love with Rama ; while the rakshasa Vidyujjhva accompanied them as the sage himself. Sarana had arranged to prevent Visvamitra coming back to his hermitage with Rama, by placing in their way Tataka with the strength of a thousand elephants in her, and Mareecha and other redoubtable rakshasas to help her.

Satananda, the priest of Janaka, had often recounted to Janaka the greatness and glory of Dasaratha, of his being blessed with four sons through the grace of Rishyasringa, and of Rama, the embodiment of all perfections human and divine. It was thus that Seetha came to know of Rama and fall in love with him.

Ravana was quite capable of abducting Seetha by force ; but, Rambha's curse and Sankara's great kindness towards Janaka, one of the most ardent of His devotees, stood in his way. Rishi Atri and his wife Anasooya came to the hermitage of Visvamitra to be present at the sacrifice. Seetha saw her beloved Rama in her dreams one night and was more in love with him than ever, if possible. Atri knew that Ravana was doing his best to marry Seetha ; so, he said to his wife " Give your cloth of white silk and the fragrant sandal paste to Seetha. That will effectually protect her from the rakshasas". Meanwhile, Visvamitra gave Seetha a bracelet and said to her " Wear this and the rakshasas will not be able to see you." Ravana knew of it and sent Sarana to her disguised as a brahmana from Ayodhya ; he gave her happy news of Rama and as a reward, got from her the precious bracelet.

Ravana was unable to prevent Rama and Visvamitra

from reaching the hermitage, as Mareecha, Tataka, Subahu and the rakshasas were routed by Rama. The rakshasa king was gone to the asrama disguised as Rama. It Visvamitra happened to see him, the illusion could be destroyed ; so, he devised a means of preventing the sage from coming to his asrama. Close to the spot where Dasaratha had pitched his camp, he created an illusion, whereby Seetha was seen slowly walking along, lost in delicious thoughts about Rama and accompanied by two maids. Rama saw it and was over-powered with love towards her. All at once a messenger ran in hot-footed and announced the dreadful news that Janaka was slain by Ravana. With a heart-rending scream Seetha threw herself into the fire. In the meantime Ravana and Khara had made away with the companions of Rama and replaced them. They cunningly persuaded Rama of the truth of what took place and he prepared to follow Seetha to the other world. But, his foot struck against a stone and from it sprang Ahalya, the beautiful. She bowed low before her deliverer and acquainted Rama with the wiles of the rakshasas, whereat they disappeared with a flash ; and Rama's mind was clear once more.

The rakshasas then went to Janaka as the expected parties from Ayodhya, when a messenger from Indra spoke from the sky. "Royal sage ! Yonder Visvamitra is but the rakshasa Vidyujihva ; and Rama and Lakshmana that are with him are no other than Ravana and Sarana." By that time the real Visvamitra and Rama came to the place, and the rakshasas fled. The rishi recounted Rama's valourous deeds and how Tataka met her death at his hands. Then Janaka was seized with a great doubt ; it may be another ruse of the rakshasas.. So, he gave out that Seetha was to be the wife of him who would bend the bow of Siva, for, he well knew that it was an impossible feat for the rakshas. Visvamitra gathered

that the rakshasas had played their tricks with Janaka; else he would not be so suspicious. He sent for the bow and directed Rama to bend it, which he did. Janaka's doubts were dispelled and he gave Seetha in marriage to Rama.

APPENDIX B.

[The following is to be appended to the notes on the pages indicated]

Notes:—Page 19

Narada: —The further back one recedes into the darkness of the pre-historic ages, the more philosophical does the pro-typic figure of the later Satan appear. The first “Adversary” in individual human form, that one meets with in old Puranic literature, is one of her greatest rishis and yogis—Narada, surnamed the “Strife-maker”. And he is a Brahmaputra, a son of Brahma, the male.—*Secret Doctrine Vol. I, p. 444.*

To the mind of the Eastern student of occultism, two figures are indissolubly connected with mystic Astronomy, Chronology, and their cycles. Two grand and mysterious figures, towering like two giants in the Archaic Past, emerge before him, whenever he has to refer to Yugas and Kalpas. When, at what period of pre-history they lived, none save a few men in the world know, or even can know, with that certainty which is required by exact chronology. It may have been 100,000 years ago, it may have been 1,000,000 for all that the outside world will ever know. The mystic West and Freemasonry talk loudly of Enoch and Hermes. The mystic East speaks of Narada, the old Vedic rishi, and of Ausura-maya, the Atlantean.

It has already been hinted that of all the incomprehensible characters in the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas*, Narada, the son of Brahma in the *Matsya Purana*, the progeny of Kasyapa and the daughter of Daksha in the *Vishnu Puran*.

na is the most mysterious. He is referred to by the honourable title of Deva-Rishi (Divine Rishi, rather than Demi-god by Parasara, and yet he is cursed by Daksha and even by Brahma. He informs Kamsa that Bhagavan, or Vishnu in exotericism, would incarnate in the eighth child of Devaki, and thus brings the wrath of Indian Herod upon Krishna's mother; and then, from the cloud on which he is seated—invisible as a true Manasaputra—he lauds Krishna, in delight at the Avatar's feat of killing the monster Kesin. Narada is here, there, and everywhere ; and yet, none of the *Puranas* gives the true characteristics of this great enemy of physical pro-creation. Whatever those characteristics may be in Hiudu Esotericism, Narada,—who is called in Cis-Himalayan Occultism Pesh-Hun, the "Messenger", or the Greek Angelos—is the sole confidant and the executor of the universal decrees of Karma and Adi-Budha; a kind of active and ever incarnating Logos, who leads and guides human affairs from the beginning to the end of the Kalpa.

Pesh-Hun is a general, not a special, Hindu possession. He is the mysterious guiding intelligent power, which gives the impulse to, and regulates the impetus of cycles, Kalpas and universal events. (This is perhaps the reason why, in the *Bhagvad Gita* we are told that Brahma had communicated to Narada in the beginning that all men whatsoever, even Mlechchas, outcasts and barbarians, might know the true nature of Vasudeva and learn to have faith in that Deity). He is Karma's visible adjuster on a general scale ; the inspirer and the leader of the greatest heroes of this Manvantara. In the exoteric works he is referred to by some very uncomplimentary names such as *Kalikaraka*, strife-maker, *Kapi-Vaktra*, Monkey-faced, and even *Pisuna*, the Spy, though elsewhere he is called Deva-Brahma, Even Sir William Jones was strongly

impressed with this mysterious character from what he gathered in his Sanskrit studies. He compares him to Hermes and Mercury, and calls him "the eloquent messenger of the gods." (see *Asiatic Researches* i. 265) All this, besides the fact that the Hindus believe him to be a great rishi, "who is for ever wandering about the earth, giving good counsel," led the late Dr. Kenealy (*Book of God.* 60) to see in him one of his twelve Messiahs. He was, perhaps, not so far off the real track as some imagine.

What Narada *really* is, cannot be explained in print nor would the modern generations of the profane gather much from the information. But it may be remarked, that if there be in the Hindu Pantheon a Deity which resembles Jehovah, in tempting by "suggestion" of thoughts, and "hardening" of the hearts of those whom he would make his tools and victims, it is Narada. Only with the latter it is no desire to obtain a pretext for "plaguing," and thus showing them "*I am the Lord God.*" Nor is it through any ambitious or selfish motive ; but, verily, to serve and guide universal progress and evolution.

Narada is one of the few prominent characters, if we except some gods, in the *Puranas*, who visit the so-called nether or infernal regions, Patala ; whether or not it was from his intercourse with the thousand-headed Sesha, the Serpent who bears the Seven Patalas and the entire world like a diadem upon his heads, and who is the great teacher of Astronomy, (Sesha, who is also, Ananta, the infinite, and the "Cycle of Eternity" in Esotericism, is credited with having given his astronomical knowledge to Garga, the oldest astronomer of India, who propitiated him, and forthwith knew all about the Planets and how to read omens) that Narada learned all that he knew, certain it is that he surpasses Garga's Guru in his knowledge of cyclic intricacies. It is he who has charge of our progress and national weal or woe. It

is he who brings on wars and puts an end to them. In the old stanzas, Pesh-Hun is credited with having calculated and recorded all the astronomical and cosmic cycles to come, and with having taught the Science to the first gazers at the starry vault. And it is Asuramaya, who is said to have based all his astronomical works upon those records, to have determined the duration of all the past geological and cosmical periods, and the length of all the cycles to come, till the end of this Life-Cycle, or the end of the seventh Race.

There is a work among the Secret Books, called the *Mirror of Futurity*, wherein all the Kalpas within Kalpas, and Cycles within the bosom of Shesha, or Infinite Time, are recorded. This work is ascribed to Pesh-Hun-Narada.—*Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II. pp. 51—53.

In the Aryan allegory the rebellious sons of Brahma are all represented as holy ascetics and yogis. Re-born in every Kalpa, they generally try to impede the work of human pro-creation. When Daksha, the chief of the Prajapatis or creators, brings forth 10,000 sons for the purpose of peopling the world, Narada—a son of Brahma, the great Rishi, and *virtually* a Kumara, if not so in name—interferes with, and twice frustrates Daksha's aim, by persuading those sons to remain holy ascetics and eschew marriage. For this, Daksha curses Narada to be "re-born as a man," as Brahma had cursed him before for refusing to marry, and obtain progeny, saying : "Petish in thy present [Deva or Angelic] form ; and take up thy abode in the womb"—*i.e.*, become a man."

Notwithstanding several conflicting versions of the same story, it is easy to see that Narada belongs to that class of Brahma's "First-born," who have all proven rebellious to the law of animal pro-creation, for which they had to incarnate as *men*. Of all the Vedic Rishis, Narada, as already shown, is the most incomprehensible, because

the most closely connected with the Occult Doctrines—especially with the Secret Cycles and Kalpas.

Certain contradictory statements about this Sage have much distracted the Orientalists. Thus he is sown as refusing positively to "create" or have progeny, and even as calling his father Brahma a "false teacher" for advising him to get married, as related in the *Narada-Pancha-Ratra*; nevertheless, he is referred to as one of the Prajapatis or progenitors ! In the *Naradiya Purana*, he describes the laws and the duties of the celibate Adepts; and as these Occult duties do not happen to be found in the fragment of about 3,000 stanzas in the possession of European museums, the Brahmins are proclaimed liars ; the Orientalists forgetting that the *Naradiya* is credited with containing 25,000 Stanzas, and that it is not very likely that such MSS. should be found in the hands of the Hindu profane, those who are ready to sell any precious Olla for a red pottage. Suffice it to say, that Narada is *the Deva-Rishi of Occultism par excellence*, and that the Occultist who does not ponder, analyse, and study Narada from his seven Esoteric facets, will never be able to fathom certain anthropological, chronological and even cosmic Mysteries. He is one of the Fires above mentioned and plays a part in the evolution of this Kalpa from its incipient down to its final stage. He is an actor who appears in each of the successive acts, or Root-races, of the present Manvantaric drama, in the world-allegories which strike the key-note of esotericism, and are now becoming more familiar to the reader.—*Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II pp. 86 and 87.

The *Divine Man* dwelt in the animal, and therefore, when the physiological separation took place in the natural course of evolution—when also "all the animal creation was *untied*," and males were attracted to females—that race fell ; not because they had eaten of the Fruit of Knowledge and knew Good from Evil, but because they knew no better.

Propelled by the sexless creative instinct, the early sub-races had evolved an intermediate race in which, as hinted in the Stanzas, the higher Dhyan Chohans had incarnated. This is the "Undying Race," as it is called in Esotericism, and exoterically the fruitless generation of the first progeny of Daksha, who curses Narada, the divine Rishi, for having dissuaded the Haryasvas and the Sabalasvas (the sons of Daksha) from procreating their species, by saying; "Be born in the womb; there shall not be a resting place for thee in all these regions." After this, Narada, the representative of that race of *fruitless* ascetics, is said, as soon as he dies in one body, to be reborn in another. "When we have ascertained the extent of the universe and learnt to know all that there is in it we will multiply our race," answer the sons of Will and Yoga to their brethren of the same race, who invite them to do as they do. This means that the great Adepts and Initiated Ascetics will "multiply," (*i.e.*) once more produce "mind-born" immaculate sons—in the Seventh Root-Race.

It is so stated in the *Vishnu* and *Brahma Puranas*, in the *Mahabharata*, and in the *Harivamsa*. In one portion of the *Pushkara Mahatmya*, moreover, the separation of the sexes is allegorized by Daksha, who seeing that his will-born progeny, the "Sons of passive Yoga," will not create men, "*converts half himself into a female* by whom he begets daughters," the future females of the Third Race which begat the Giants of Atlantis, the Fourth Race, so-called. In the *Vishnu Purana* it is simply said that Daksha, the father of mankind, established sexual intercourse as the means of peopling the world.

Happily for the Human Race the "Elect Race" had already become the vehicle of incarnation of the highest Dhyanis (intellectually and spiritually), before Humanity had become quite material. When the last sub-races

save some of the lowest—of the Third Race had perished with the great Lemurian Continent, the “Seeds of the *Trinity of Wisdom*” had already acquired the secret of immortality on earth, that gift which allows the same great Personality to step *ad libitum* from one worn-out body into another.—*Ib.* pp. 287 and 288.

Page 57. Superhuman powers :—

The following passages represent the latest western views upon the subject and are in entire consonance with the teachings of the Aryan rishis : —

The whole process of recovering more or less remote events is a question of picturing them in the particular sheath—of shaping part of the matter of the sheath into their likeness—in which consciousness is working at the time. In the Self, as a fragment of the Universal Self—which for our purpose we can take to be the Logos, although in verily the Logos is but a portion of the Universal Self—is present everything ; for in the Universal Self is present all which has taken place, is taking place, and will take place in the universe; all this and an illimitable more is present in the Universal Consciousness. Let us think only of a universe and its Logos. We speak of Him as omnipresent and omniscient. Now, fundamentally, that omnipresence and omniscience are in the individualised Self, as being one with the Logos, but we must put in here a but—with a difference ; the difference consisting in this, that while in the separated Self, as self, apart from all vehicles, that omnipresence and omniscience reside by virtue of his unity with the One Self, the vehicles in which he dwells have not yet learned to vibrate in answer to his changes of consciousness as he turns his attention to one or another part of his contents. Hence, we say that all exists in him potentially, and not as in the Logos actually ; all the changes which go on in the consciousness of the Logos are reproducible in this

separated Self, which is an indivisible part of His Life, but the vehicles are not yet ready as media of manifestation. Because of the separation of form, because of this closing in of the separate, or individualised, Self, these possibilities which are within it as part of the Universal Self are latent, not manifest, are possibilities, not actualities. As in every atom which goes to the making up of a vehicle, there are illimitable possibilities of vibration, so in every separated Self there are illimitable possibilities of changes of consciousness.

We do not find in the atom, at the beginning of solar system, an illimitable variety of vibrations ; it acquires these in the course of its evolution, as it responds continually to vibrations playing upon its surface ; at the end of a solar system, an immense number of the atoms in it have reached the stage of evolution in which they can vibrate in answer to any vibration touching them that arises within the system ; then, for that system, these atoms are said to be perfected. The same thing is true for the separated, or individualised, selves. All the changes taking place in the consciousness of the Logos which are represented in that universe, all these are also within the perfected consciousnesses in that universe and any of these changes can be reproduced in any one of them.

Here is memory ; the re-appearance, the re-incarnation in matter, of any thing that has been within the universe and therefore ever *is*, in the consciousness of its Logos, and in the consciousnesses which are parts of His consciousness. Although we think of the self as separate as regards all other selves, we must ever remember it is inseparable as regards the One Self, the Logos. His life is not shut out from any part of His universe, and in Him we live and move and have our being, open ever to Him, filled with His life.

As the Self puts on vehicle after vehicle of matter, its powers of gaining knowledge become, with each

additional vehicle, more circumscribed but also more definite. Arrived on the physical plane, consciousness is narrowed down to the experiences which can be received through the physical body, and chiefly through those openings which we call the sense-organs ; these are avenues through which knowledge can reach the imprisoned Self, though we often speak of them as shutting out knowledge when we think of the capacities of the subtler vehicles. The physical body renders perception definitive and clear, much as a screen with a minute hole in it allows a picture of the outside world to appear on a wall that would otherwise show a blank surface ; rays of light are truly shut off from the wall, but, by that very shutting off, those allowed to enter form a clearly defined picture.—*A Study in consciousness* by Annie Besant ; pp. 265-269.

What is Memory ? The breaking up of the bodies between death and reincarnation puts an end to their automatism, to their power of responding to vibrations similar to those already experienced; the responsive groups are disintegrated, and all that remains as a seed for future responses, is stored within the permanent atoms ; how feeble this is as compared with the new automatisms imposed on the mass of the bodies by new experiences of the external, may be judged by the absence of any memory of past lives initiated in the vehicles themselves. In fact, all the permanent atoms can do is to answer more readily to vibrations of a kind similar to those previously experienced than to those that come to them for the first time. The memory of the cells, or of groups of cells, perishes at death, and cannot be said to be recoverable, as such. Where then is memory preserved ?

The brief answer is : Memory is not a faculty, and is not preserved ; it does not inhere in consciousness as a capacity, nor is any memory of events stored up in the

individual consciousness. Every event is a present fact in the universe-consciousness, in the consciousness of the Logos ; everything that occurs in His universe, past, present, and future, is ever there in His all-embracing consciousness, in His " eternal Now." From the beginning of the universe to its ending, from its dawn to its sunset, all is there, ever-present, existent. In that ocean of ideas, all is; we, wandering in the ocean, touch fragments of its contents, and our response to the contact is our knowledge; having known, we can more readily again contact; and this repetition—when falling short of the contact of the outside sheath of the moment with the fragments occupying its own plane—is Memory. All "memories" are recoverable, because all possibilities of image-producing vibrations are within the consciousness of the Logos, and we can share in that consciousness the more easily as we have previously shared more often similar vibrations ; hence, the vibrations which have formed parts of our experience, are more readily repeated by us than those we have never known, and here comes in the value of permanent atoms ; they thrill out again, on being stimulated, the vibrations previously performed, and out of all the possibilities of vibrations of the atoms and molecules of our bodies, those sound out which answer to the, note struck by the permanent atoms. The fact that we have been affected vibrationally and by changes of consciousness during the present life makes it easier for us to take out of the universal consciousness that of which we have already had experience in our own. Whether it be a memory in the present life, or one in a life long past, the method of recovery is the same. There is no memory save the ever present consciousness of the Logos, in whom we literally live and move and have our being ; and our memory is merely putting ourselves into touch with such parts of His consciousness as we have previously shared.

Hence, according to Pythagoras, all learning is remembrance, for it is the drawing from the consciousness of the Logos into that of the separated Self that which, in our essential unity with Him, is eternally ours. On the plane where the unity overpowers the separatedness, we share His consciousness of our universe ; on the lower planes, where the separatedness veils the unity, we are shut out therefrom by our unevolved vehicles. It is the lack of responsiveness in these which hinders us, for we can only know the planes through them. Therefore, we cannot directly improve our memory ; we can only improve our general receptivity and power to reproduce, by rendering our bodies more sensitive, while being careful not to go beyond their limit of elasticity. Also we can "pay attention," (*i. e.*) we can turn the awareness of consciousness, we can concentrate consciousness, on that special part of the consciousness of the Logos to which we desire to attune ourselves. We need not thus distress ourselves with calculations as to "how many angels can stand on the point of a needle," how we can preserve in a limited space the illimitable number of vibrations experienced in many lives ; for the whole of the form-producing vibrations in the universe are ever-present, and are available to be drawn upon by any individual unit, and can be reached as, by evolution, such a one experiences ever more and more.

Remembering and Forgetting.

Let us apply this to an event in our past life : Some of the circumstances "remain in our memory", others are "forgotten." Really, the event exists with all its surrounding circumstances, "remembered" and "forgotten" alike, in but one state, the memory of the Logos, the Universal Memory. Any one who is able to place himself in touch with that memory can recover the whole circumstance as much as we can;

the events through which we have passed are not ours, but form part of the contents of His consciousness ; and our sense of property in them is only due to the fact that we have previously vibrated to them, and therefore vibrate again to them more readily than if we contacted them for the first time.

We may, however, contact them with different sheaths at different times, living as we do under time and space conditions which vary with each sheath. The part of the consciousness of the Logos that we move through in our physical bodies is far more restricted than that we move through in our astral and mental bodies, and the contacts through a well-organised body are far more vivid than those through a less organised one. Moreover, it must be remembered that the restriction of area is due to our vehicles only ; faced by the complete event, physical, astral, mental, spiritual, our consciousness of it is limited within the range of the vehicles able to respond to it. We feel ourselves *to be* among the circumstances which surround the grossest vehicle we are acting in, and which thus touch it from "outside"; whereas we "remember" the circumstances which we contact with the finer vehicles, these transmitting the vibrations to the grosser vehicle, which is thus touched from "within."

The test of objectivity that we apply to circumstances "present" or "remembered" is that of the "common sense". If others around us see as we see, hear as we hear, we regard the circumstances as objective; if they do not, if they are unconscious of that of which we are conscious, we regard the circumstances as subjective. But this test of objectivity is only valid for those who are active in the same sheaths ; if one person is working in the physical body and another in the physical and the astral, the things objective to the man in the astral body cannot affect the man in the physi-

cal body, and he will declare them to be subjective hallucinations. The "common sense" can only work in similar bodies ; it will give similar results when all are in physical bodies, all in astral, or all in mental. For the "common-sense" is merely the thought-forms of the Logos on each plane, conditioning each embodied consciousness, and enabling it to respond by certain changes to certain vibrations in its vehicles. It is by no means confined to the physical plane, but the average humanity at the present stage of evolution has not sufficiently unfolded the indwelling consciousness for them to exercise any "common sense" on the astral and mental planes. "Common sense" is an eloquent testimony to the oneness of our indwelling lives; we see all things around us, on the physical plane in the same way, because our apparently separate consciousnesses are all really part of the One Consciousness ensouling all forms. We all respond in the same general way, according to the stage of our evolution, because we share the same consciousness ; and we are affected similarly by the same things because the action and reaction between them and ourselves in the interplay of One Life in varied forms.

Recovery of anything by memory, then, is due to the ever-existence of every thing in the consciousness of the Logos, and He has imposed upon us the limitations of time and space in order that we may, by practice, be able to respond swiftly by changes of consciousness to the vibrations caused in our vehicles by vibrations coming from other vehicles similarly ensouled by consciousness ; thus only can we gradually learn to distinguish precisely and clearly ; contacting things successively—that is, being in time—and contacting them in relative directions in regard to ourselves and to each other—that is, being in space—we are gradually unfolded to the state in which we can recognise all simultaneously and each everywhere—that is, out of time and space.

As we pass through countless happenings in life, we find that we do not keep in touch with all through which we have passed ; there is a very limited power of response in our physical vehicle, and hence numerous experiences drop out of its purview. In trance, we can recover these, and they are said to emerge from the sub-conscious. Truly they remain ever-unchanging in the Universal Consciousness, and as we pass by them we become aware of them, because the very limited light of our consciousness, shrouded in the physical vehicle, falls upon them, and they disappear as we pass on ; but as the area covered by that same light shining through the astral vehicle is larger, they again appear when we are in trance—that is, in the astral vehicle, free from the physical ; they have not come and gone and come back again, but the light of our consciousness in the physical vehicle had passed on, and so we saw them not, and the more extended light in the astral vehicle enables us to see them again. As Bhagavan Das has well said :—

“ If a spectator wandered unrestingly through the halls of a vast museum, a great art-gallery, at the dead of night, with a single small lamp in one hand, each of the natural objects, the pictured scenes, the statues, the portraits, would be illumined by that lamp, in succession, for a single moment, while all the rest were in darkness, and after that single moment, would itself fall into darkness again. Let there now be not one but countless such spectators, as many in endless number as the objects of sight within the place, each spectator meandering in and out incessantly through the great crowd of all the others, each lamp bringing momentarily into light one object and for only that lamp. This immense and unmoving building is the rock-bound ideation of the changeless Absolute. Each lamp-carrying spectator out of the countless crowd is one line of consciousness out of the pseudo-infinite lines of such, that

make up the totality of the one universal consciousness. Each coming into light of each object is its patency, is an experience of the Jiva ; each falling into darkness is its lapse into the latent. From the standpoint of the objects themselves, or of the universal consciousness, there is no latency, nor patency. From that of the lines of consciousness, there is."

As vehicle after vehicle comes into fuller working, the area of light extends, and the consciousness can turn its attention to any one part of the area and observe closely the objects therein included. Thus when the consciousness can function freely on the astral plane, and is aware of its surroundings there, it can see much that on the physical plane is "past"—or "future," if they be things to which in the "past" it has learned to respond. Things outside the area of light coming through the vehicle of the astral body will be within the area of that which streams from the subtler mental vehicle. When the causal body is the vehicle, the "memory of past lives" is recoverable, the causal body vibrating more readily to events to which it has before vibrated, and the light shining through it embracing a far larger area and illuminating scenes long "past"—those scenes being really no more past than the scenes of the present, but occupying a different spot in time and space. The lower vehicles, which have not previously vibrated to these events, cannot readily directly contact them and answer to them ; that belongs to the causal body, the relatively permanently vehicle. But when this body answers to them, the vibrations from it readily run downwards, and may be reproduced in the mental, astral, and physical bodies.

Attention.

The phrase is used above, as to consciousness, that "it can turn its attention to any one part of the area, and observe

closely the objects therein included". This "turning of the attention" corresponds very closely in consciousness to what we should call focussing the eye in the physical body. If we watch the action taking place in the muscles of the eye when we look first at a near and then at a distant object, or *vice versa*, we shall be conscious of a slight movement, and this constriction or relaxation causes a slight compression or the reverse in the lenses of the eye. It is an automatic action now, quite instinctive, but it has only become so by practice ; a baby does not focus his eye, nor judge distance. He grasps as readily at a candle on the other side of the room as at one within his reach, and only slowly learns to know what is beyond his reach. The effort to see clearly leads to the focussing of the eye, and presently it becomes automatic. The objects for which the eye is focussed are within the field of clear vision, and the rest are vaguely seen. So, also, the consciousness is clearly aware of that which its attention is turned ; other things remain vague, "out of focus."

A man gradually learns to thus turn his attention to things long past, as we measure time. The causal body is put into touch with them, and the vibrations are then transmitted to the lower bodies. The presence of a more advanced student will help a less advanced, because when the astral body of the former has been made to vibrate responsively to long past events, thus creating an astral picture of them, the astral body of the younger student can more readily reproduce these vibrations and thus also "see." But even when a man has learned to put himself into touch with his past, and through his own with that of others connected with it, he will find it more difficult to turn his attention effectively to scenes with which he has had no connexion ; and when that is mastered, he will still find it difficult to put himself into touch with scenes outside the

experiences of his recent past ; for instance, if he wishes to visit the moon, and by his accustomed methods launches himself in that direction, he will find himself bombarded by a hail of unaccustomed vibrations to which he cannot instinctively respond, and will need to fall back on his inherent divine power to answer to anything which can affect his vehicles. If he seeks to go yet further, to another planetary system, he will find a barrier he cannot over leap, the Ring Pass-not of his own Planetary Logos.

The One Consciousness.

We thus begin to understand what is meant by the statements that people at a certain grade of evolution can reach this or that part of the kosmos ; they can put themselves into touch with the consciousness of the Logos outside the limitations imposed by their material vehicles on the less evolved. These vehicles, being composed of matter modified by the action of the planetary Logos of the chain to which they belong, cannot respond to the vibrations of matter differently modified ; and the student must be able to use his atmic body before he can contact the Universal Memory beyond the limits of his own chain.

Such is the theory of Memory which I present for the consideration of theosophical students. It applies equally to the small memories and forgettings of every-day life as to the vast reaches alluded to in the above paragraph. For there is nothing small or great to the Logos, and when we are performing the smallest act of memory, we are as much putting ourselves into touch with the omnipresence and omniscience of the Logos, as when we are recalling a far-off past. There is no "far-off" and no "near". All are equally present at all times and in all spaces ; the difficulty is with our vehicles, and not with that all-embracing change-

less Life. All becomes more and more intelligible and more peace-giving as we think of that consciousness, in which is no "before" and no "after," no "past" and no "future." We begin to feel that these things are but the illusions, the imitations, imposed upon us by our own sheaths, necessary until our powers are evolved and at our service. We live unconsciously in this mighty consciousness in which everything is eternally present, and we dimly feel that if we could live consciously in that Eternal there were peace.—*A study in consciousness* by Annie Besant, pp. 276-292.

Super-physical investigations may be divided into different classes, according to the vision which is used. The power of perception may be exercised by the consciousness working in the emotional (astral), mental, causal, intuition (buddhic) or spiritual (atmic) vehicle. If the seer is studying phenomena connected with the astral or mental worlds—the inhabitants of these worlds, the conditions of purgatory and heaven and the dwellers therein respectively, thought or desire-forms, lower auras, and the like—he will use astral and mental vision, as is convenient ; if he can only use his astral body, he cannot see outside that world, and can only study astral phenomena ; if he can use the "illusory body" (the Mayavi Rupa) (*i.e.*), the mental body with a temporarily created astral materialisation, he will use mental vision, and as much astral as he needs. If he is studying the past, he will work through the causal, for though glimpses of past incarnations may be caught on the astral and mental planes—stray pictures thrown or drawn down by special causes—consecutive and voluntary study of the past can only be carried out by the consciousness working in the causal body. The student must not confuse such study with the special activity of the consciousness in the causal body working by abstract thought, with

attention turned inwards not outwards, any more than he must confuse the special activity of the consciousness in the mental body, creating thought-images and reasoning on them, with the observation of the external phenomena of the mental world, taking place outside his own mental body. We perceive through the causal body the full picture of the past, and can observe as much detail as we chose ; that picture contains a perfect reproduction of the whole past scene, and can be passed quickly or slowly before our gaze, and can be repeated at will ; we see not only the causal bodies, say of a man, but also his mental, emotional and physical bodies, and the 'causal vision' of the trained seer includes all, and more than all the powers of sight exercised on lower levels. ("Without senses, enjoying sense objects"; "Without eyes, He sees ; without ears, He hears," etc, "He is the seer, the Hearer, the Knower.)"

Observations on globes of our Chain other than the earth are made by going to them in the intuitional vehicle and shaping any organs there required out of the material of those globes.

There are many passages in the Upanishads implying these ideas. It seems to me that we come down into the physical world in order to make our power of perception definite and precise, by its sub-division into senses through the organs of the senses, and that we then carry the precision and accuracy thus gained back with us to be used by our power of perception when exercised in any of our subtler bodies. It is a fact of experience to every seer who is able to use his causal body freely, with outward-turned attention, that he sees things belonging to all the lower planes *i. e.* concrete phenomena ; I think the explanation of this lies in the experiences which he has gone through on the lower planes.

Previous rounds may also be studied in this way. Observations on the two earlier Chains must be made with the spiritual vision. These higher powers of vision again, include all, and more than all, the powers of sight exercised on lower planes ; they do not see vaguely, indefinitely, mistily, but with a clarity and an accuracy beyond all words. As each new power of sight unfolds, the seer is inclined to exclaim ; "I never saw before." It is as though the words of the Apostle were reversed : "Then I saw through a glass darkly, but now face to face. Then I knew in part, but now I know even as I am known."

It is evident, then, that in considering investigations into the super-physical we have to deal with various powers of vision, and with an immense range of very varied phenomena. Moreover, as we ascend, the number of seers diminishes, and the reason of the non-seer will be deprived of even the few data for forming a judgment that he could use on lower levels ; with regard to those, there being a large number of witnesses, he can compare their testimonies, note where they agree and where they differ. But with regard to such subjects as past Races, Rounds and Chains, it seems impossible for those who lack the power to investigate for themselves and to exercise any reasonable judgment as to the statements made, for they are thrown back on a mere handful of investigators. We have available : The wonderful series of letters from the Master K. H., systematised by Mr. A. P. Sinnett and published in his valuable book, *Esoteric Buddhism*, the first in point of time that deals sequentially with these subjects; then we have H. P. Blavatsky's splendid work, *The Secret Doctrine*, unrivalled in its range ; there are the books on Lemuria and Atlantis, issued by Mr. Scott Elliot ; there is a little book on Atlantis, issued by Mr. Kingsland ; there are the researches of Dr. Rudolf Steiner; and there are the records

of observations by Mr. Leadbeater and myself, now collected in the book, *Man ; Whence, How, and Whither*. There may of course be others which I do not know. There is, with minor differences, a fair consensus of opinion among all these, with the exception of researches made by Dr. Rudolf Steiner ; and the differences in those may be largely due to the fact that he deals with the subject rather from the psychological stand-point than from that of the observation of the succession of external phenomena. Reasoning on ordinary possibilities in the physical world known to all, is of very little use in this case. We are in a region where we have all described things that are facts or not facts ; either they exist or they do not exist. We are not dealing with theories, but with records of observations, or flights of fancy, or a mixture of the two. Hence the need of caution, both in accepting or rejecting—for the time being—the statements made. The value of W. Kingdon Clifford's arguments on the fourth dimension, based on the higher mathematics, can only be estimated by his mathematical peers ; the rest of us cannot judge them, and any opinion we may form is worthless. It is much the same when the non-seer is confronted with the records above-named ; many accept for the time the seer who appeals to them on other grounds, and they accept him on those grounds as an *authority*, not being able to judge for themselves ; by the exercise of their intuition, or otherwise, they regard one particular person as their teacher, and where reason stops, they believe him or her. That is all right enough, but none of these has any right to impose his own belief in his teacher or any body else, and it seems fitting that all such should be careful to be moderate in their language, as they are only putting forward opinions which are repetitions of the views of their own respective favourite authorities, and these they are themselves unable to justify by any first hand.

knowledge. Whoever the authority may be, he or she is only an individual, who cannot rightly formulate beliefs for others, though fully justified in recording his own. I am well aware that, in the past, the differences of opinions which have caused great schisms have been—as above pointed out—just those on which the combatants on both sides could have no personal knowledge. But mistakes in the past are signals warning us of pitfalls in the present, and we would profit by them rather than repeat them. It is inevitable that each should form an opinion on the value of the researches made, but none should force his opinion on others ; to proclaim one person as an infallible authority on a subject unknown to the proclaimer is to show fanaticism rather than reason. I would ask my own friends not to do this with me.

I do not argue that because, in the higher research, all the students but one agree in the main outlines, therefore the one is wrong. *Athanasius contra Mundem* is sometimes right.

It is interesting to notice that the matters on which considerable differences of opinion arise are—with the exception of the views of Christ, noted above—matters which do not bear on life and conduct, but on those which, however interesting as knowledge, are outside that which is needed for the guiding of human life. Life and conduct are immensely influenced by knowledge of the astral and mental worlds—which include purgatory, and heaven—of thought and desire forms, of the lower auras, and other matters of that ilk. This great class of super-physical investigations is the class most useful to the ordinary man ; the yet more vital teachings of brotherhood, reincarnation and karma can be taught on intellectual and moral grounds, apart from super-physical research, though they may be aided and reinforced thereby. The class of super-natural phenomena,

then, which is most useful is the one which is most within reach, which a fair number of people can investigate, and on which students are fairly agreed. The differences which arise are differences common to all forms of scientific research, and to these we now turn.

In dealing with super-physical researches—we are in the world of science and not of revelation. There are great truths known to the Masters that none of us are able to reach and to investigate. If any of these are given out by the Master, people can accept them or not, according to the view they take as to the authority of the source, and the reliability of transmitter. But, when we are dealing with investigations into other worlds, into the past of our globe, into the various evolutions that have gone on in our solar system ; when we are dealing with investigations into races and sub-races ; when we are concerned in reading the story of the past, whether as applied to the history of humanity or not ; on the whole of these things we are not in the region of revelation, we are in the region of research; exactly the same canons that we apply to research of the ordinary scientific kind, exactly the same caution in accepting results, exactly the same readiness to repeat experiments that have been made, to revive opinions, to recast conclusions that may have been arrived at on insufficient data—the whole of these things which are common places when we are reading about botany or electricity, that we take for granted in all our ordinary scientific studies, the whole of these apply when any one begins studying the investigations of those who are carrying on researches in a region subtler than that dealt with in the ordinary sciences ; they are making experiments ; they are relying as much on their own observations, and on comparing those observations with those of others, as much any scientist in the obscurer regions of investigation :

they put forward what they have observed, but they do not ask that their statements shall be regarded as part of some great sacred literature, to be looked upon with the utmost reverence and not to be challenged. Students must get out of this atmosphere altogether, when dealing with people whose senses are merely a little better developed than their own, senses that everybody will be having sometime hence, it may be fifty, one hundred or two hundred years hence, but senses that are in the course of evolution, that all men have to some extent, that many have to a considerable extent. Research becomes mischievous and harmful in its results when the senses used in it are looked upon as some sort of divine gift, instead of as the result of a strenuous forcing process, so that a person possessing them is placed on a pedestal, or treated like a sybil of ancient days through whom some God was speaking. They are merely senses of a finer and keener kind than the physical, but belonging to the phenomenal world just as much as the physical belong to it ; observations made through them depend for their value on careful attention to the objects observed, and rigid accuracy in reporting that which has been perceived. Some people may consider that this is a very cold and prosaic way of approaching a subject which is enwrapped to them in glamour and mystery. But when glamour and mystery only mean that they do not understand the question and the methods of investigating it, is it not better to get rid of them ? Is it not safer and saner to realize that there is no more mystery and glamour in examining the after-death state with the astral vision, than in examining the Tyrol with the physical? —no more, but *also just as much*. For to see a daisy is a thing as wonderful and mysterious as to see an angel, and the dawn and the sunset are as full of glamour to the seeing eye as the shimmer of colours in an aura.

I have said that there is a large class of super-physical phenomena a knowledge of which affects human life and human conduct. To know something of these not only immensely widens our view of life, but the possession of such knowledge is very important in the guidance of our life now. If we understand after-death conditions and their relations to our conduct here, we can so think, desire, and act now as to ensure favourable conditions then. Ours is a continuous life, and a knowledge of that which is 'beyond the veil' is of vital importance in the same and rational guidance of our life in this world. Moreover we are living in these worlds all the time, and an increasingly large number of people are more or less susceptible to the vibrations of the finer matter composing these worlds. It is very satisfactory to find that on these matters there is a consensus of opinion among observers as to the main points, and variations are confined to details. The literature on these is voluminous, both inside and outside the Theosophical Society, and many small variations will be found in statements concerning these phenomena. It will be useful to understand how variations must arise even among fairly developed seers.

There is one great difference between physical and super-physical research—the apparatus used in them respectively. The physical plane scientist, investigating that which escapes his vision by its distance or its minuteness, uses an instrument outside himself, a telescope, a spectroscope, a microscope. The super-physical scientist, under similar conditions, evolves within himself the necessary apparatus. Intelligence, as M. Bergson points out, works on inorganic matter by means of arrangements of inorganic matter, while instinct modifies organic matter into the organ it requires within its own body. In this, occult investigation resembles instinct, in seeking its instruments

from the life of the organism, from the consciousness as a whole ; desiring to see, the man creates out of his appropriated matter the organ of vision ; he must evolve, by a steady and well-directed exercise of the will, organs which are practically new, and only then can he call on his intelligence to use them as organs of observation in the world from which has been taken the materials for their fabrication. The Occultist has, however, this advantage over his fellow-scientist of the physical plane, that the latter must work with instruments which he cannot carry beyond a certain limit of delicacy ; whereas the Occultist can continue to create subtler and subtler instruments, right up to the level of the subtlest phenomenon in his solar system ; and when he goes beyond the solar system he can again create instruments suitable to the new conditions.

We must remember that while the senses are being used, it is the man himself who is using them, and he is using them from the higher planes ; the higher the vehicle in which he is working, the better can be control the observation of the senses going on on the planes below his own. It is the spiritual ego, brooded over by the spirit himself, who is the observer, and he puts down his power of perception as senses into the lower bodies, and this power works in their organs of sense ; those organs of senses which work on the lower planes, astral and mental, will be subject to conditions very similar to those working on the physical plane, and these are not difficult to understand.

Let us consider how we see. We say : ' I see ', or ' I observe ' ; but I am inclined to think that very few people analyse the complexity of what seems to them to be the very simple act of sight. In most acts of vision there is a little real sight and a great deal of memory. What we call ' sight ' is a complex, compacted of the translation

of the impression just made on the retina and the memory of the whole of the past impressions made by the same or by similar objects. We are not simply seeing the object with the eye ; we have laid up in our memory the images of a number of similar perceptions, and we weld the whole of these into our present perception, and then say : 'I see.' It is useful to realise this. If we look at the photograph of a friend, we recognise it; a baby or a dog looks at it, and does not relate the flat image on the card to the living father or master whom he knows and loves. We see, for the first time in this life, a number of Spaniards, or Indians ; we say : "How alike they all are." We confuse them together. They do exactly the same with us. The first thing we see in a number of similar objects is that which they have in common, (*i. e.*) their likeness to each other. As we multiply the sense-impressions, we gradually notice the differences, their unlikenesses to each other. We distinguish by differences. First, we perceive the common type ; then we see the minor distinctions. A shepherd is said to know each of his sheep ; we only see a flock. We really at first see very little of the object of observation, and only as we see it over and over again do we begin to make our perception approximate to the object perceived. As the past experiences of each of us differ widely, we each see each thing differently to a considerable extent ; we bring to each new observation, a different mass of memories, and these modify the present perception thereof. Hence, apart from mere carelessness, people really see physical objects differently, the greater part of each act of perception being memory, and this being different in each.

Apply all this to observations on the astral plane. The length of time during which the seer has been able to see astrally is an important factor in his accuracy. As he grows

more and more accustomed to that world he will perceive differences, more clearly, and be less deceived by likenesses. When he meets a new object, he will at once distinguish it from many other objects of a similar type, whereas the new observer will see the likeness and ignore the differences. Accurate observation there, as here, will depend on experience and memory. An account of early observations will err on the side of likeness, and the beginner will note similarities where the more experienced seer observes difference. His view of the astral world will only gradually become more and more detailed and exact.

Next, we must consider the differences between people in this world, as to accuracy, alike of observation and report, differences which largely arise from differences in the power of paying attention to a thing. The attention of some people is constantly wandering, fluttering like a butterfly from flower to flower and such people cannot be accurate, either in observing or in recording what they have seen. Not only is accuracy of observation one of the rarest things in the world, but the power of memory, which records exactly what has been seen, varies much in different observers. Inaccuracies are sure to creep into descriptions, unless the observations made are immediately written down. In fact, inaccuracy is best avoided by having present a second person to write down the record of the observation, while the observation is going on ; then the seer can very carefully observe the objects before him, while the scribe can write down the words of description exactly as they fall from his lips ; in this way a mistake in memory will not confuse details, and thus blur the accuracy of the record. For instance, in making the observations, now embodied in *Man* ; *Whence, How and Whither*, the two seers observed at the same time, stopping and re-examining any obscure point, discussing with each other—

while the objects were being looked at—any difficult matter; while two scribes took down, independently, every thing that was said, even to the most ejaculatory sentence.

The higher the vision that is being used, the more useful is it that the seer and scribe should be two different persons ; the experienced observer does not need this aid when he is observing the lower planes, which are familiar to him by reiterated observation ; he normally lives consciously in the three worlds, and is thoroughly at home in them all. But observations of unfamiliar scenes, demand more concentrated attention, and then the aid of a friendly scribe is invaluable.

Another thing which leads to many superficial differences of observation is the difference of interest in the different observers. If an artist, a politician, a student of religion, an artisan and an idler should visit the same country, hitherto unknown to them, and should send home descriptions of it to their friends, how different would those descriptions be. The artist's reports would lead one to think that the cities consisted of art-galleries, studios, concert-rooms, and museums, and that art was the chief interest of the nation. The politician would tell of debates, of the strife of parties, of the intrigues of statesmen. The student of religion would draw a picture of church dignitaries discussing theological questions, of conflicting doctrines, of rival sects. The artisan would report conditions of labour, the state of trade, the various crafts practised, and would show the nation as one huge workshop. The idler would write of theatres and music-halls, of dances and dinner-parties, of society gossip and dress. Their respective correspondents, if the country were quite new to them, would gain very different ideas about it. So is it with the many descriptions given by seers of the astral and mental worlds. The personal equation largely colours the obser-

vations ; the man sees the aspects of life in which he personally feels the keenest interest, and only the thoroughly trained seer gives a fairly unbiased, full, and well-proportioned account.

Again, many descriptions given of the astral world are merely local. People talk of the astral world as though it were the size of Birmingham or Glasgow, instead of being a world considerably larger than the physical, with an immense variety of peoples and other creatures. Many speak of it as though it could be run over in a few hours, whereas few know a tithe of its varied aspects. Observers look at certain types of people, mostly ordinary discarnate entities, as though nothing else were of interest there, and so gain but a very restricted view. Suppose that a dweller in a far-off planet were brought here and plunged into a London slum, were taken through its courts and alleys, and shown the lives of its inhabitants; suppose that having studied this, he was whisked back again to his distant home, and gave there an account of the 'world' which he had seen ; his report might be very accurate—as to the slum ; but it might give a very false impression of our world. An instance similar to this may be found in a very interesting little book, entitled *The Grey World* ; it describes various very dismal conditions and describes them well, but comparatively few people will go through these on the other side of death. They belong to the experiences of those only who, clinging strongly to life, physical remain in the etheric double for a considerable time after death, instead of quickly shaking it off and going on into the astral world.

Another difficulty is connected with the nature of astral sight itself. Astral vision not only differs from the physical in that any part of the astral body can be used for seeing, but also that the observer sees through everything and everything, so that objects take on a very different

aspect from those of the physical plane, and backs and fronts insides and outsides are at first much confused. A man's own thought forms appear to him as independent and celestial entities ; astral matter moulds itself to his thinking, and he sees a beautiful landscape stretching in front of him, unwitting that it is his own creation : he sees what he expects, for expectation has made images, and these present themselves to him as objects ; recollections of earth picture themselves as astral surroundings, and people with similar ideas live together in scenes collectively constructed. The astral world to the uninstructed new-comer is as queer and unlike the reality as is the physical world to the eyes of a new-born baby. Each has to learn the conditions into which he has been plunged.

Here comes in the question of training, which, in the case of those who seek to be 'taught, differs much with what is called the type, or ray, of the teacher and the pupil. I may be permitted to take as contrasting examples, Mr. C. W. Leadbeater and myself. Mr. Leadbeater, from the opening of his astral vision, was carefully trained in its use ; an older disciple took him in hand, asked him constantly : "What do you see?", corrected mistakes, explained difficulties, until his observations were accurate and reliable. I was tossed out into the astral world, left to make mistakes, to find them out, and correct them, to learn by experience. It is obvious that where training is so different, results will be different. Which is the better way ? Neither or both. The first way is the better for the training of a teacher ; the second is the better for the training for my kind of work. In the long run, each will acquire the powers of the other; these powers are merely obtained in a different order. And if people, instead of quarrelling with each other over their differences, would learn to utilise them by co-operating with and supplementing each other, great profit

would ensue. One will be best in ascertaining details, the other in discovering broad outlines. More may be done together than either could do independently.

Things change in appearance as the power of vision increases. A globe is seen, and one calls it a globe. Later on, one finds that it is not a globe, but the physical end of a form composed of higher kinds of matter. Down here the solar system consists of globes rolling in their orbits round a central sun. From a high plane the solar system looks like a lotus flower, its petals spread in space, its golden centre the sun, and the tip of each petal a world. Was one wrong to speak of a world as a globe? No; it is true on the physical plane. But later, one sees things differently. We see things down here as we might see a picture through holes in a veil which covers it; through the holes we see patches of colour; remove the veil, and the patches are part of a garment, of a hand, of a face. Alas! our senses shut out more than they reveal; they are holes in the wall which imprison our perceptive power. They often deceive us; but such as they are, with all their defects, we must make the best of them. Even talc windows in a wall are better than none.

Moreover, observers, like other people, grow and develop, and the observations of to-day will be much fuller than those of twenty years ago, unless they have stood still during that period; if they have grown, then they will be using much improved powers, which will enable them to be much more minute and accurate than before. Unless students realise that researches are being made by people who are still growing, they will be upset by all new discoveries. Super-physical investigations are like the gropings of scientists on the physical plane. The higher senses grow more delicate, just as the scientist manufactures for himself finer apparatus. The records of research should

be taken as the work of investigators who have made them as accurate as they can, and who hope to make them fuller and more accurate by and by. We are evolving persons, studying an infinite universe. The worst thing any one can do is to take our imperfect studies as a "Thus saith the Lord". There are no authorities, absolute and infallible in the Theosophical Society.

Let me take as an example the investigations made into the atoms by Mr. Leadbeater and myself, in 1895 and in 1907-8. In 1895 we said that the ultimate physical atom disintegrated into astral matter. That was what we saw. In 1907-8, using other sight, we found that between the ultimate physical atom and its appearance as astral matter a whole series of changes intervened, a series of disintegrations into ultimate bubbles in Ether, and of integrations back to astral matter. The case is analogous to the study of an object under the lower and higher powers of a microscope. You look at it through a low power and describe it ! say, that you see little separate particles, and that you so describe them in your record of your observation. You put on a higher power ; you discover that little threads of matter, too fine to be visible under the low power, link the particles together into a chain. The first record can hardly be said to be wrong ; it recorded accurately what was seen under the low power, the *appearance* presented by the object. All vision can only tell of appearances, and we may always be sure that its records are imperfect. We enlarge our perceptions as we ascend from one plane to another, and gain a completer view of each object.

Only well-trained and experienced seers will avoid the errors which result from looking at facts through a veil of their own thought forms, and this causes further differences. A Roman Catholic untrained seer will find in heaven the Madonna and Child, the Christ and the Saints ; the Hindu

will find Sree Krishna and Mahadeva ; the Buddhist will sit in rapt contemplation before the Buddha ; angels and devas will be seen crowding round ; the *mis-en-scene* belongs to and varies with the prepossessions of the seer. What are the facts, without the setting ? That each man in heaven sees and worships his own object of devotion, and into each such form the one Lord pours something of his life, his love, meeting and welcoming the outpouring of the love of his devotee, for all worship him, though he be wrought into many forms by many hands. Beautiful indeed is it that each man should see in heaven the Divine in the form which attracted his heart while he was on earth, for thus does no man feel a stranger in his father's house ; he is met on the very threshold by the welcoming smile of his Beloved. The untrained seer of any religion is drawn to those of his own faith, sees their objects of devotion, and thinks that this is all there is of heaven. The trained seer sees them all, and realises that each makes his own image and that the image is vivified for him by the one divine Life ; when he reads the descriptions of heaven in Christian, Buddhist, Hindu books, he recognises the object they describe ; so he recognises that which Swedenborg saw, and that which many discarnate entities describe. The differences do not make him feel that nothing can be known accurately—the effect produced on some by the great diversity of detail ; on the contrary, he sees how much of truth there is amid differences of detail, and even that the detail, apparently the most incongruous, may give a hint of an overlooked fact to add to this store of knowledge, just as we often learn the most from things with which we the least agree. The things which do not appeal to us, the fact, or the aspect of a fact, which we have not observed, very often supply some particular factor which is distinctly valuable in our intellectual life.

Finally : surely we ought to be strong enough and sensible enough to agree to differ where our minds are made up on any point, and to be ready to listen to views with which we disagree..... We have broken the yokes from our own necks ; we must not make new ones, for our descendants to break hereafter.

No one of us possesses the whole truth ; very far are we from the all-round view of Those " who have nothing more to learn " in our system. Generations far in the future, ourselves in new bodies, will still be extending the limits of the known, and pressing on into the unknown ; we do not want our limits to be fettered then by appeals to our present researches, exalted into scriptures, nor to find our opinions, canonised into fossils, used as walls to bar our onward progress then.

And do not be too quick to believe. Intuition is a higher faculty than observation, and the intuition of many spiritually-minded people clung to the great truths of religion when the facts discovered by science seemed to prove them false. The facts of nature have not altered, but new aspects of them have been discovered by further observations, and values have been revised, so that intuition is being justified by the progress of the very science which it opposed. If the intuition of any reader sets itself against any discovery of any investigator, let the former be patient and suspend his judgment. He may be wrong, and may be mistaking prejudice for intuition; if so, he will presently find it out. But *he may be right*, and while the fact, if it be a fact, must remain true, the view taken of it and of its meaning may be wrong ; if so, further knowledge will presently correct the error.

" Prove all things ; hold fast that which is good." Let us study as strenuously as we can, sift all statements according to our ability, " follow peace with all men," and

willingly extend to all the same liberty that we claim for ourselves.—*The Theosophist, Vol. XXXIII, pp. 751—757 & 893—909.* “*Investigations into the Super-physical.*”

P. 91. *Hindu music* :—

Music in Ancient India.

(From the *Tamil Antiquary*.)

Mr. C. Thirumalayya Naidu, M. R. A. S.

“ Roll back symphony, opera, oratorio, Beethoven, Bach, all the great men that have lived for the art ; violin, dulcimer, drum, every musical instrument ever invented ; all the arts, all the culture and civilization that have grown up cheek by jowl with the art by itself ; roll back all these into primeval night ; and leave as the only actor standing—a man; given then a man and the universe, the problem is —How should the man proceed to the manufacture of music ? ” This question has been answered variously by various scholars, and is still the engrossing theme of the musica antiquary who loves to dwell in his own macrocosm of delightful sounds which appeal to him far more powerfully than anything else in this microcosm of multitudinous interests. But it has, all the same, equally interested the lay man whose curiosity early led him to attribute the origin of music to the gods who were believed to sway mankind by their portentous acts, and the philosopher who viewed the subject from his lofty pedestal of logic and science, without being a slave to superstitions, which often meet and gratify the innermost longings of the heart, offer certainties where they can only afford possibilities, and supply conceptions on which the imagination most fondly dwells. The *Speech* theory of Spencer, the *Sexual Feeling* theory of Darwin, and the *Rhythmic* theory of Wallascheck have prominent place in the consideration of the origin of primitive music. In the early infancy of man, prayers were offered to what we now know as the inexorable laws of nature. It was

in offering such prayers that the aid of music or what passed for music in those days was invoked to appease the anger or pacify the malevolence of cruel invisible agencies which threatened him with destruction. A close kinship can thus be traced between the early musical, and religious consciousness of man. Both take their rise in the 'mystical impulse' in which emotion predominates. It was probably a bundle of such superstitious impulses that provoked the early Hindu bards into bursting forth into those hymnal chants in praise of the sun, moon and elements, that were the first foundations of that musical system, which had later on been developed with such great accuracy of conception. The hymns of the Rig and the Sama Vedas are the earliest examples of words set to music. Though it is difficult to trace minutely the stages of evolution music had passed through, before it was brought under a system of rules governing its practice, still it had already passed beyond the stage of mere recitation and declamation. By the time of the Ramayana, it was sufficiently developed so as to be indispensable as an adjunct to poetry in the recitation of ballads. The early bards who indulged in the lighter forms of poetical and musical compositions, animated by the enchanting scenery of the wild romantic regions of India, which helped the development of sentiment and imagination, willingly dedicated themselves to the Muses, "like the grass-hopper that sings all summer without food, to the entire oblivion of the more common concerns of life." They were thus enabled to invent a species of poetry which, set to music, inspired new life. It was this recognition of the relation of poetry to music that is perhaps one of the many causes of the superiority of Sanskrit poetry, which had so skilfully adapted artistic means to artistic ends. Music and poetry has thus become associated with each other, especially in India, where they

both became early subservient to religion, and where a study of it was taken up by the Rishis, 'whose aspirations found vent in measured numbers and varied tone.'

'The Ramayana' says Mr. Cust, 'is no dull volume of exploded and abortive philosophy, no vast commentary which it makes the head ache only to open and glance at, but a noble epic poem, fresh and original'. It was the first epic poem of Valmeeki, the earliest of the Indian poets who composed it in stately *Anushtup* metre. It was the immediate offspring of the emotion of grief which agitated the sage, on hearing the lamentations of the pair of *Crouncha* birds, one of which was wantonly shot by a hunter, as they were sporting together, and which caused him to vent forth his imprecations in the *Sloka* form, this account corroborating to some extent what is known as the emotional theory of music. Valmeeki was thus the first poet and composer combined in one. After finishing the poem, he did not at first know what means he was to adopt, to popularise it. Unlike Homer, who is supposed to have sung his own epics himself, Valmeeki turned to the deserted sons of Rama, whom he instructed to recite it, in all the beauty of its melodious metre and entralling music and who were in every way fitted for the task 'as bearing upon their persons the signs of their noble origin, ravishing beauty equal to the gods, voices fresh from heaven, notes borrowed from the choir of the angel'. The great poem was sung among the hermitages, charming all hearers, and exciting alternately their compassion and admiration. The heavenly music sung so admirably by the boy musicians drew tears from the learned audience, 'as the noble epic wandered from grave to gay, leading the passions in gentle control, now melting to pity, now rousing to enthusiasm.' As the music ceased, they burst forth in a chorus of praise, and exclaimed in a state of ecstasy 'Oh ! the mellifluous music and the superior beauty

of the slokas ! Oh ! the poem whose incidents which happened long ago, appear, in their true colouring, as if brought before our very eyes.' Mr. Cust describes the whole scene in his own most felicitous manner. 'One day the steps of the noble youths were led to the royal city of Ayodhya. There, on his solitary throne, sat the widowed and childless hero, he that had conquered himself and his enemies ; round him were ranged his brothers, the faithful Lakshmana, and the still more faithful brother Bharata, and the Brahmans and the citizens ; and when in this noble crowd sounded the harmonious and majestic lines from the voices of these boys, the great hero himself was overpowered by the memory of his achievements, thus nobly recorded, thus divinely rehearsed ; strong feeling sprung up in his bosom towards those wondrous twins in whom he could recognise his own lineaments, blended with those of the long-lost Vaidehi. On the rest of the assembly so softly fell the notes that, when the boys ceased, all, old and young, thought them still speaking, and continued listening, as if entranced. They began to feel indeed, what fame was, and blessed the poet, that could give immortality to the deeds of the hero."

If it be asked what were the qualities of the poem that so enchanted the learned assembly of the Rishis, we have no hesitation in saying that it was due to its simple metre, with its easy flow, the agreeable melody, which was sung without effort ; an unpretending accompaniment, a rhythm which was easily followed ; a correct and distinct accentuation ; words which were inspired by natural sentiment ; and above all, a highly poetic imagination which conceived and presented things which occurred long ago, with a true fidelity. The essence of true song being 'concentrated' emotion enthraling words and music alike, suffusing them with its own hues, the range of the poet's sympathetic intuition

made it possible to enter into the very heart and mind of the audience. He produced, with scrupulous art, all that ran in his mind, 'be it ever so subtle and delicate, and permeated it with a deeper shade of meaning.' 'What a true poet produces' says a critic, 'may greatly delight and astonish his readers, yet not so greatly as its delights and astonishes himself. His passages of pathos draw no tears so deep or so sweet as those that fall from his own eyes, while he writes ; his sublime passages overawe no soul so imperiously as his; his own humour draws no laughter so wild or so deep as that stirred within his own breast.' It was such a consummate knowledge of the relationship between musical and metrical laws that enabled Valmeeki to produce a wonderful strain of pathetic verse which, set to music of an enrapturing kind, had justified the saying that 'it is time alone that can produce a man of genius and breathe the inspiration of great events. He was truly a child of the "times", vividly reflecting the dominant emotions of the hour and the scene in which he lived, and in the words of Emerson, 'a heart in unison with his time and country'.

'True art and poetry' says Schlegel, 'are the beautiful crown, the promising blossoms, yea, the very flowers of hope, on the nobly-grown tree of humanity, as it widely expands itself in rich and marvellous intellectual development. True poetry is the most universal of all arts, as it very often springs "indigenous" in other domains of art, in each of which there is a predominance of 'some kind of higher feeling'. A deep feeling and an exquisite sense of beauty were both exhibited by Valmeeki to the eye 'in the combinations of form,' and to the ear in sweet strains of appropriate melody. His art consisted in those sublime touches which depicted emotion in all its variety of working. While the natural and artificial blended and harmonized in their true colouring, he had always subordinated art to nature, in the study of

which, he was 'dutiful and affectionate.' His communion with Nature was 'direct, thoughtful, and imaginative.' It was only such an affectionate love of nature and natural objects that enabled him to paint so truly and passionately the minutest beauties of the external world. 'Whoever the author is' says Cust, 'he must have been a dweller of the forest. Valmeeki had indeed trodden alone, and in deep contemplative mood, the deep forests of India, untrodden by the foot of man, and unpierced by solar rays, and had observed in their native home, the strange trees which towered high in silent grandeur and appeared to hold communion with the heavens in their gigantic majesty; those sweet smelling flowers and grasses which wasted their fragrance 'on the desert air'; the silent wanderings of fierce carnivora which devastated the whole country by their unceasing ravages; the deep humming of the insect world, which enchanted the scenery all round. He was peculiarly susceptible to Nature's music, which he describes with unabated enthusiasm and real feeling. The notes of the lark, the delicious musical frenzy of the nightingale, and the sweet warblings of the cuckoo and the peacock were enough to rouse his musical susceptibilities to their highest pitch. 'The forests were alive with the music of the bees and the dancing of the peacocks. The sweet humming of the bees which reminded one of stringed music, was accompanied by the croaking of the frogs at regular intervals, which appeared as if they kept time to the stringed music of the bees, and by the grave thunder of the clouds which resembled the sweet sounds of *Mridanga*; the music was kept up by the delightful cooings or the cuckoos, and the well-measured dances of peacocks; the forest looked like a big drinking saloon, overflowing with fresh torrents after the rain, filled with abundant foliage and sweet smelling grasses and flowers and with peacocks which cooed

and danced like drunkards intoxicated with liquors': (*Kishkindhakanda* 28). Even when describing the uproar and the terrific sounds on the battle-field, he could not but use the language of music of which he was so passionately fond. 'The music of the battle-field which was so awfully forced on the ear, was supplied by the terrific twangings and crash of the bows, which took the place of stringed instruments, while the tune was kept by the hiccoughs of the dying heroes, and the low moanings of the elephants supplied the vocal music' (*Yuddhakanda*, 52). Ravana boasting of his great valour on the battle-field and addressing the foremost generalissimos of his army, says "Entering on the wide stage of this battle-field, which is swarming with the army of my bitter enemies, I shall now play upon the lute of my terrific bow with the sticks of my arrows, whose bow strings shall produce the most tumultuous noise, which will swell the helpless cries of the awe-struck warriors" (*Yuddhakanda*, 24.)

A musical critic writing about the songs of Russia remarks, 'From the cradle to the grave, song is the constant companion of the Russian's life. It is the delight of both the sexes and of every age. The sports of childhood, the pleasures of youth, and all the varied occupations of mature years have each their own appropriate accompaniment of song'. If this is so with the Russians, it is no less so with the Hindus whose susceptibility to poetic sentiment and religious fervour has early begotten in them an insatiable love for music, which they manifested even in ordinary concerns of life. Leaving alone hymnal chants and devotional songs sung at rituals, there are ceremonial songs sung at betrothals, marriages, christenings and funerals, not to speak of the folk songs of wandering minstrels who are the first recorders of historical events and who celebrate in song the heroic exploits of warrior-chieftains and of

notorious highwaymen and brigands, and of the many pathetic and mirthful love-songs provoked by the true love and heroic death of many a village Romeo and Juliet. Whether all or any of these ever existed or were sung in ancient India we have no precise means of ascertaining. No such body of songs has been preserved for us. There is no doubt, however, that many of the customs, on which they were based, were prevalent in early times. We read in the Ramayana, that, early on the morning of the day on which Rama was to have been installed, the usual paraphernalia of palace attendants, were in due attendance on Dasaratha (who however died on the previous night) with the necessary bathing and toilette requisites. There were the ever-ready court-panegyrists whose loud recitations rent the place with their deafening sounds. While some were singing the virtues of the ancient kings of the solar dynasty, some were engaged in beating time with their hands. There were also vocalists and Vina players, who joined them in swelling the chorus (*Ayodhyakanda*, 65). Bands of minstrels formed an important adjunct to palace service, and were in attendance on the king not only on ceremonial occasions, but were engaged in these duties both every morning and evening. Of course there were also singers and instrument-players who were indispensable on all ceremonial occasions. Music was equally indispensable on occasions of religious sacrifices, as on occasions such as the birth of the royal children, their christening, coronations, etc. (*Balakanda*, 18).

Even in the remotest regions of Kishkindha, music was incessantly heard. Rama listened, from the top of Rishyamuka hill, to the voices singing to the accompaniment of the *Mridanga*, and to the hilarious dancing of the monkey-subjects of Kishkindha, (*Kishkindhakanda*,

37). As Lakshmana entered the inner apartments of Sugriva's harem, he heard the ravishing strains of music that was played on the Vina and other stringed instruments and which was accompanied by the faultless singing of accomplished singers who were so expressive as to make every word, and even every syllable intelligible, which blended with the instrumental music in perfect harmony (*Ib.* 33). In describing the conversation between Hanuman and Rama, on their first meeting, Valmeeki could not but express it in the language of music. 'Rama, when he was listening to Hanuman as he was speaking, found that he (Hanuman) always kept to his chest-voice, without attempting to force himself into higher pitch, and delivered himself in neither too rapid nor too slow movement, such a movement being necessary to ensure the sympathy of the vocal chords with which the tones and tissues of a well-inflated chest would vibrate. (*Ib.* 8). He appears as if he were describing here a singing voice rather than a speaking voice and probably intended to suggest that such a studied intonation implied no ordinary musical training of the voice. Equally noteworthy is his insistence of good and distinct pronunciation of words set to music, with a view to their clear intelligibility. Though, for singing purposes, the elements of language are reducible to a small compass, still accurate pronunciation goes a great deal to make the music intelligible. A musical critic observes : 'Peculiarity and indistinctness of pronunciation are too great and well-known barriers to the adequate enjoyment of vocal music ; the first because it is constantly drawing the attention from what ought to be almost ethereal and the second, because it sets the hearer thinking what it is all about and the moment he begins to think, he ceases to feel. It is the province of the singer to purify the sounds of the language to its utmost. It was

this aspect of singing that Valmeeki emphasized, with a view to bring the character of the music within the easy comprehension of the people. He attached equal importance to music and—the words to which it was set (*Balakanda*, 4 ; *Ayodhyakanda* 81). Some of the wives of Ravana were extremely clever in interpreting the words which constituted the song (*Sundarakandha*, 11). This probably refers to the various kinds of interpretation which words are capable of, according as they are sung in different keys (*Fatis* in the language of Valmeeki) or in different styles.

Laws of phonetics were early studied as an art, with a view to ensure a correct recitation of the Vedic texts. At the time when the Ramayana was written, it might be supposed to have reached the stage of regulated declamation which was generally accompanied by instruments with stretched strings that were either plucked or struck. It was already regarded as indispensable as a course of study by the enlightened. The art of music was then known as the Gandharva (*Ayodhyakanda*, 2) which was studied as a branch of polite literature by the royalties. According to Bharata, it comprehended instrumental music, both of stringed and other kinds, and was of three kinds, according as it treated of *Swara* (notes), *Laya* (time-measure) and *Pada* (words) (*Bharata Natya Sastra*, page 302). It was royal patronage that was the cause of its elevation to a dignified position among the five arts, which were then known as the "Vyharika Silpas" (*i. e.*) arts which have pleasure or recreation for their object. Rama had an expert knowledge of the fine arts (*Ayodhyakanda*, I. 28). When Dasaratha proposed to his subjects that Rama should be installed as the Yuvaraj or Crown Prince, the latter were only too glad to accept him as their *de facto* ruler and supported the proposal by commending, among other virtues which

qualified Rama for the new office, his great proficiency in the science and art of music (*Ib.* II, 35). It was the chastening and humanising character of music which was calculated to evoke in a ruler well versed in it sympathy and anxious solicitude for his subjects. It was this aspect of music which the subjects of Dasaratha emphasised by referring to Rama's proficiency in music as a superior merit in one who was destined to take an active part in the administration of the country. Ravana was also a great master of music. It was his sublime chanting of vedic hymns that appeased Siva, whom he offended in one of his haughty moods. At the great banquet given by Bharadwaja in honor of Bharata, the guests were regaled with the exciting music of stringed instruments of various kinds (*Ib.* 91). Some of the wives of Ravana were experts in the art of vocal and instrumental music (*Sundarakanda*, X. 32).

Dancing, like music, was much patronised in those days. No prudery was displayed by hypercritical men, and every science and art grew and flourished in the healthy atmosphere of innocent enjoyment. Few were prepared to follow the absurd modern puritanical dictum of 'morals before art or pleasure.' A professional class of dancing women was called into existence, who catered to the artistic requirements of the people (*Balakanda*, X. 5). Among others, eminent painters, sculptors and dancing masters were directed to be present at the great horse-sacrifice by Vasishtha (*Ib.* 17). On the day of the christening of the sons of Dasaratha, the city of Ayodhya was ringing with the music of vocal and instrumental players, of dancing women and their masters (*Ib.* 18). On the day of Rama's installation, a number of beautifully dressed dancing women together with their masters, who accompanied them with cymbals in their hands, were ordered to

assemble in the second court-yard of the palace (*Ayodhyakanda* 3, 1). On hearing of the return of Rama to Ayodhya, Bharata ordered a big procession of his subject, among whom there were expert musicians and dancing women, to start from the city and receive him with greeting. Rama was preceded by bands of musicians and instrumental players who greeted him with welcome songs on the occasion of his state entry into Ayodhya (*Yuddhakanda*, 131). Such was the high state of civilization of the times that, in addition to those sources of recreations, there were excellent theatrical companies, which were a great source of pleasurable excitement to the public. In those companies renowned actresses took part (*Balakanda*, 5). Among the large concourse of people who accompanied Bharata, to bring back Rama from his forest sojourn, there were also actors and actresses (*Ayodhyakanda*, 83). In those days female parts in dramatic representations were enacted only by females, and not by males as is sometimes done at present. This is in accordance with the opinion of Bharata that "females make the best singers, as they are endowed by nature with sweet and flexible voice, while males have a more or less expressive voice and are better qualified to be teachers of music than singers themselves. To suppose that males can sing sweetly and that females will make good teachers, is nothing but rhetoric and is not their true nature." (*Bharata Natya Sastra*, page 407.)

I have thus far outlined the circumstances that tended to promote the growth and development of musical taste in those days, which cannot but point to the high degree of civilization attained in this direction. The musical art which corresponded to the lively sensibility of the people was fostered under the benign care of enlightened royal patrons who were themselves great masters of the art,

Vocal music is said to be the oldest branch of the art of music, and recitations by bards commemorative of the exploits of heroes are a later development of vocal music. But such recitations which are intended to excite the close attention of the people, would naturally fall flat, if unaccompanied by instrumental music of some kind or other. We accordingly find that different varieties of the *Vina* had early become popular as an accompaniment, just as the lyre was the common accompaniment among the Greeks. It is, however, impossible at this distance of time, to precisely estimate the true character of the music to which the Ramayana was set. Judging from the description as given by Valmeeki, it must have been of a very simple kind. There is no mention of the word *Raga* in the musical sense in the Ramayana. It is a peculiar growth of later times, as it is peculiar to the land of its birth. But in its place, a system of what were known as *Jatis* came to be early devised. We read that the twins Kusa and Lava sang the poem in such a way that the music was highly melodious, the time being varied not only in the three different kinds of movements viz. *Druta*, *Madhya* and *Vilambita* (corresponding in modern phraseology to *presto*, *allegro* and *andante*) as the nature of the subject demanded, but also in the seven different *Jatis*, or, (as we would now call, *Ragas* or *Keys* in the technical phraseology of the modern western music), and accompanied by the *Vina* with which it was in perfect tune. They were such great proficients in the art of music that they could, with facility, modulate from one note to another through several subordinate transitions which touched the three keys or octaves. (*Balakanda*, 4). The mention of the word *jati* here is significant. The *jatis* were at this time only seven in number, although Bharata mentions eighteen different kinds of *jatis* (*Bharata Natya Sastra*,

p. 307). Judging from the *gitas*, specimens of which are given in the *Sangita Ratnakara*, a *gita* belonging to the *Shadji jati*, began with the note Shadja and ended on the same note : in the *Arshabhi jati*, the *gita* began with the note Ri, and ended on the same note, and so on. This system of transposition would be best calculated to introduce a variety of scales which were the foundation on which the huge edifice of the later system of *Ragas* was based. The *Ramayana* must be supposed to have been sung in these seven different *jatis* which were varied according to the discretion of the singers, and which afforded facilities for varying qualities of melodic expression. Repeatedly encored by the learned Rishis who sat dumb founded at the perfect execution of the singers (whose very speaking was as melodious as their singing, *Balakanda*, 4) and whose eyes were filled with tears of joy, they recited the story with such exquisite sweetness, and in such an expressive way, that every word was perfectly intelligible. The learned assembly complimenting them on the extensive repertory of songs at their command, said 'Oh ! You adepts in music ! This is the choicest of your songs, whose beauty is enhanced by the use of agreeable chromatic intervals' (*Ibid*). In describing the music at the banquet of Bharadwaja, Valmeeki displays a rare knowledge of the science. 'While bands of Apsarasas danced, the celestial musicians sang to the accompaniment of different kinds of stringed instruments which poured forth their dulcet sounds in such happy succession, that the harmony of the vocal and instrumental music was not only perfect (*Layagunavita*) but was executed in such a pianissimo style *Slakshna*) and in neither too rapid nor too slow movement (*sama*) and such an expressive manner (*Uccharita*) that all animated creation was spell-bound?

(*Ayodhyakanda*, 91). Such was the music which Valmeeki was never tired of describing in his own inimitable way. Few poets, ancient or modern, could approach him in his rare grasp of the subtleties of music and in the happy manner of his description.

Instrumental music seems to have been developed to a high degree of perfection. *Bheri*, *Dundubhi*, and *Mridanga* were big sized kettle-drums which were indispensable both in times of war and peace. They heralded royal processions, proclaimed state ceremonials, coronations, birth-day celebrations, marriage, etc. They announced the march of the contending parties, on the battle-field. Royal places reverberated incessantly with their deafening sounds. In the Royal palace in Ayodhya big kettle-drums (*dundubhi*) were played with sticks of gold at every *Yamam* (three hours) in the night. (*Ib.* 8). They probably served the purpose of hour-gongs of the present-day. *Mridanga* was of two kinds, a big sized one played with sticks. (*Ib.* 71), and the other, of a smaller kind, which was employed as an accompaniment to vocal music (*Sundarakanda*, 10). *Pataha* was another instrument of the drum kind used also as an accompaniment to vocal music (*Ibid*). It is explained as a side-drum covered with skin, and played, like the *Ghata*, either with stick or hand; (*Sangita Ratnakara*, Vol. II, page 567). *Panava* and *Dindima* were probably, other varieties of the same kind (*Sundarakanda*, 10.) *Mudduka* was a kind of brass-trumpet played as an accompaniment (*Ibid*). *Adambara* was a kind of a shrill clarionet (*Ibid*). But the more interesting of the musical instruments were those of the stringed kind. *Vina* was a general name for all kinds of stringed instruments. The *Vina* which *Kusa* and *Lava* have played to the accompaniment of their voices could have been either of the *Pinaki* or the *Nissanka* kind, which was played with a bow, and which

would have better fitted as an accompaniment by giving out a greater volume of sound.

Bharata, on his return to Ayodha, was surprised to find that no sounds of *Bheri*, *Mridanga* and *Vina* played with sticks, were heard, as used to be the case before (*Ayodhyakanda* 71). . The Commentator *Govindaraja* wrongly interprets this passage as meaning that *Bheri* and *Mridanga* only were played with sticks but the *Vina* was played with the hand. He was probably not aware that there were two kinds of *Vina*, *Chitra* and *Vipanchi* which were optionally played with sticks (or *plectrums* as we would now call them) or with the hand. *Chitra* had seven strings, and *Vipanchi*, nine, not seven as the above commentator thinks. The *Sangita Ratnakara* (*vide Vol. II, 410*) says that "Chitra and Vipanchi were played both with sticks and with hand: but some think that chitra should be played with fingers and Vipanchi, with sticks ; while others think that Chitra should be played only with the fingers, and Vipanchi with both." The *Vipanchi* variety of *Vina* seems to have been in more common use than others. (*Sundarakanda* 10). A wind instrument of the flute kind was played by some of the mistresses of Ravana (*Ibid.*) while instruments of various other kinds seem to have been commonly used (*Ibid.*). Bands of *Bheri*, *Mridanga*, *Panava*, *Sankha* and *Venu* attached to the armies were played on the battle field, infusing enthusiasm into the hearts of disheartened soldiers (*Yuddhakanda* 44). Such is a brief sketch of the state of musical development in the days of the Ramayana, which is really astonishing, when we consider that the incidents delineated in the stories are supposed to have taken place nearly five-thousand years ago—a period supposed to be of Cimmerian darkness in the history of the world, compared with the modern times.

The Ramayana may be considered to be the earliest national ballad of the country. We see in it the customs, feelings and superstitions of the age truly portrayed by a master-hand. In those days when there were no newspapers to convey news, and no printed books available for easy information, it was such ballads that were instruments of knowledge and education to the people of the country. Thus preserved from oblivion, it has passed from generation to generation, with little alteration, till it is in the mouth of every one who feels as if the events recorded therein were but of yesterday's occurrence. There is no doubt that the one source of its great popularity is that it is the work of a man who was not divorced by wealth or rank or education from the mass of his fellows, but whose education came straight from nature, from which he derived his homely pathos and humour, simplicity and charm. It is this that invests it with a halo of sanctity which is denied to other works of a similar kind. Its perennial interest is in its smooth flow of diction and simple rhythm which every body is able to appreciate.

Page 131. *Manu* :—In the morning they brought water to Manu for washing, as they bring it even now for washing our hands. While he was thus washing, a fish (matsya) came into his hands and said 'Keep me, and I shall save thee from a flood which will come in such and such a year and carry away all these creatures. So long as we are small, there is much destruction for us, for fish swallows fish. Keep me therefore first in a jar. When I outgrow that, dig a hole and keep me in it. When I outgrow that, take me to the sea, and I shall then be beyond the reach of destruction. When thou hast built a ship, thou shalt meditate on me. And when the flood has risen, thou shalt enter into the ship, and I will save thee from the flood.' Accordingly Manu

kept the fish and put him in the sea, where he became a large fish (Jhasha). In the year foretold, Manu built the ship, entered into it and meditated on the fish, as soon as the flood rose. The fish swam towards him, and Manu fastened the rope of the ship to the fish's horn, and he thus hastened towards the Northern Mountain. The fish said 'I have saved thee.' As instructed by the fish, Manu bound the ship to a tree and slid down gradually into the water, and therefore this is called 'the slope (*avasarpanam*) of Manu' on the Northern Mountain. All creatures having perished in the flood, Manu was left alone. Then Manu went about singing praises and toiling, wishing for offspring. And he sacrificed there also with a *paka*-sacrifice. He poured clarified butter, thickened milk, whey, and curds in the water as a libation. In one year a woman arose from it. She came forth as if dripping, and clarified butter gathered on her step. Mitra and Varuna came to meet her and said to her 'Who art thou?' She said 'The daughter of Manu'. They rejoined 'Say that thou art ours.' 'No' she said, 'he who has begotten me, his I am'. Then, they wished her to be their sister, and she half agreed and half did not agree, but went away and came to Manu. Manu said to her, 'Who art thou?' She said 'I am thy daughter'. 'How, lady (Bhagavathi), art thou my daughter?' he asked. She replied 'The libations which thou hast poured into the water, clarified butter, thickened milk, whey and curds, by them thou hast begotten me. I am a benediction (*asih*); perform (me) this benediction at the sacrifices. If thou perform (me) it at the sacrifice, thou will be rich in offspring and cattle. And whatever blessings (*asih*) thou will ask by me, will always accrue to thee.' He therefore performed that benediction in the middle of the sacrifice, for the middle of the sacrifice is that which comes between the introductory and the final offerings. Then Manu went

about with her, singing praises and toiling, wishing for offspring. And with her he begat that offspring which is called the offspring of Manu (*Manoh Prajatih*) ; and whatever blessing he asked with her, always accrued to him. She is indeed Ida, and whosoever, knowing this, goes about, (sacrifices) with Ida, begat the same offspring which Manu begat, and whatever blessing he asks with her, always accrues to him.—*Sutapathu Brahmana* I, 8, 1.

A demon named Hayagriva, horse-headed, stole away Veda-Sruti, Vedic knowledge, and concealed her in the sea ; and Vishnu, taking up the form of a fish, dragged the ship of king Satyavrata *alias* Manu in the deluge, killed the demon and restored Veda-Sruti to Brahma to enable him to carry on the work of creation with her.—*Bh.* VIII. 24.

Another popular version is that the Danava who robbed Veda-Sruti was Somaka. Vishnu killed him and brought her back.

There was an Asura named Sankha, the son of Samudra, (sea). He conquered the Devas, who therefore ran away and hid themselves in the caves of Mount Meru. He also stole away the Vedas which were the power of the Devas. Afraid of the Asura, the stolen Vedic mantras, relating to the performance of sacrifices, entered the water of the sea ; and Sankha also entered it in search of them, but was unable to find them as they became diffused in the water. Then Brahma went to Vaikuntha with the Devas and awoke Vishnu by music on the latter part of the night of the 11th day of the Bright Fortnight of the month Kartika. Vishnu said, " Let the Vedas stolen by Sankha, the son of the sea, remain in water till I kill him. Henceforth, let the Vedas accompanied by the (sacrificial) mantras take rest in water in the month of Kartika." So saying, Vishnu became a small fish (*saphari*) and fell from the sky into the palms of Kasyapa in the Vindhya mountains. Kasyapa put the fish

into the water of his jug, then into a well, then into a tank, and then into the sea, as the fish grew bigger and bigger. When put into the sea, the fish Vishnu killed Sankha, and keeping him in his hands, came to the Badari forest. Then he stood at Prayaga, and told the Rishis to search for the diffused Vedas in the water. They did so, and each of them became the *Rishi* or the seer of so much of the Vedas as he was able to find out. With the Vedas thus found, Brahma performed a horse-sacrifice at Prayaga.—*Padma-purana, Kartika Mahatmya*, 3.

Madhu and Kaitabha are stated to have been created by Vishnu as two drops ; one became soft and the other hard ; one was of the tamas quality and the other of the rajas quality ; they carried away all the Vedas and hid them in the Rasa ; Vishnu became Hayasiras, killed the two Asuras, and restored the vedas to Brahma to enable him to carry on the work of creation.—*M. B. Vana-parva* 190 ; *Santi-parva* 357.

The administration of the Manvantaras.

First Manvantara (Swayambhuva).

Manu :—Swayambhuva.

Sons of Manu :—Priyavrata and Uttanapada.

Indra .—Yagna.

Devas :—The Tushitas.

Rishis :—Mareechi and others.

Avataras :—Yagna.

Second Manvantara (Swarochisha).

Manu :—Swarochisha, son of Agni.

Sons of Manu :—Dyumat, Sushena and others.

Indra :—Rochana.

Devas :—Tushitas and others.

Rishis :—Urjas, Sthambas and others.

Avataras :—Vibhu, the son of the Maharshi Vedasiras and his wife *Tushita*. He was a Brahmacharin and 80,000 Rishis followed his Vrata or vow.

Third Manvantara (Uttama).

Manu :—Uttama son of Priyavrata.

Sons of Manu :—Pavana, Srinjaya, Yagnahotra and others.

Indra :—Satyajit.

Devas :—The Satyas, the Devasrutas and Bhadras.

Rishis :—Pramada and the other sons of Vasishtha.

Avataras :—Satyasena, son of Dharma and Soonrita. He was the friend of the Indra and destroyed the lying Yakshas, Rakshasas and the cruel Bhootas.

Fourth Manvantara (Tamasa).

Manu :—Tamasa, brother of Uttama.

Sons of Manu :—Vrishakhyati, Nara, Ketu and others.

Indra :—Trisikha.

Devas :—Satyakas, Haris, Veeras and Vydhritis.

Rishis :—Jyoti, Vyoma and others.

Avataras :—Hari, son of Harimedhas and *Harini*. He saved the Elephant king from the crocodile.

Fifth Manvantara (Raivata).

Manu :—Raivata, the brother of Tamasa.

Sons of Manu :—Arjuna, Pratividhya and others.

Indra :—Vibhu.

Devas :—Bhootarayas and others.

Rishis :—Hiranyaroma, Vedasiras, Urdhwabahu and others.

Avataras :—The Lord of Vaikuntha, the son of Subhra and his wife *Vikuntha*.

Sixth Manvantara (Chakshusha).

Manu :—Chakshusha, the son of Chakshus.

Sons of Manu :—Puru, Purusha, Sudyumna and others.

Indra :—Mantradyumna.

Devas :—Apyas and others.

Rishis :—Havishman, Veeraka and others.

Avatarā :—Ajita, the son of Vairaja and his wife *Sam-bhooti*. The Churning of the Ocean took place during his time.

Seventh Manvantara (Vaivasvata).

Manu :—Sraddhadeva, son of Vivasan.

Sons of Manu :—Ikshvaku, Nabhaga, Drishta, Saryati, Narishyanta, Nabhaga, Dishta, Karusaka, Prishadra, Vasuman.

Indra :—Purandara.

Devas :—Vasus, Rudras, *Adityas*, *Visvedevas*, and the Asvins.

Rishis :—Kasyapa, Atri, Vasishtha, Visvamitra, Gautama, Jamadagni, and Bharadwaja.

Avatarā :—Vamana, son of Kasyapa and *Aditi*.

Eighth Manvantara (Savarni).

Manu :—Savarni, son of Vivasan and *Chaya*.

Sons of Manu :—Nirmoha, Virajaska and others.

Indra :—Bali.

Devas :—Sutapas, of the complexion of Amrita.

Rishis :—Galava, Deoptiman, Parasurama, Asvatthama, Kripa, Rishyasringa and Krishna-dwaipayana Vyasa.

Avatarā :—Sarvabhauma.

Ninth Manvantara (Daksha-savarni).

Manu :—Daksha-savarni.

Sons of Manu :—Dhritaketu, Deeptaketu and others,

Indra :—Adbhuta,

Devas :—Para, Mareehi, Garga and others.

Rishis :—Dyutiman and others.

Avatarā :—Rishabha, son of Ayushman and *Ambudhara*.

Tenth Manvantara (Brahma-savarni).

Manu :—Brahma-savarni.

Sons of Manu :—Bhoorishena and others.

Indra :—Sambhu.

Devas :—Sutramas, Vibudhas and others.

Rishis :—Havishman, Sukriti, Satya and Jatamoorti and others.

Avatarā :—Amoorti or Vishvaksena son of Visvasrit and *Vishoochi*.

Eleventh Manvantara (Dharma-savarni)

Manu :—Dharma-savarni.

Sons of Manu :—Satyadharma and others.

Indra :—Vaidhrita, an Amsa of the Avatarā.

Devas :—Vihangamas, Kamagamas, Nirvanas and Ruchikas.

Rishis :—Aruna and others.

Avatarā :—Dharmasetu, the son of Sooryaka.

Twelfth Manvantara (Bhadra-savarni.)

Manu :—Bhadra-savarni.

Sons of Manu :—Devavan, Upadeva, Devajyeshtha and others.

Indra :—Ritudhama.

Devas :—Haritas and others.

Rishis :—Tapomoorti, Tapas, Agneedhraka and others.

Avatarā :—Swadhma, son of Satyatapas and *Soonrita*.

Thirteenth Manvantara (Deva-savarni)

Manu :—Deva-savarni

Sons of Manu :—Chitrasena, Vichitra and others.

Indra :—Divaspati.

Devas :—Sukarmas and Sutramas.

Rishis :—Nirmoha, Tatvadarsa and others.

Avataras :—Yogeswara, son of Devahotra and *Brihathi*.

Fourteenth Manvantara (*Indra-savarni*).

Manu :—Indra-savarni.

Sons of Manu :—Uru, Gambheera, Vasu and others.

Indra :—Suchi.

Devas :—Pavitras and Chakshushas.

Rishis :—Agnibahu, Suchi, Sukra, Magadha and others.

Avataras :—Brihatbhanu, son of Satrayana.

(*Bh. Skandha IV*, 1; *VIII*, 1-14.)

Page 197. *Chose to take human form* :—

(From *The Avatars*, a lecture by Mrs. Besant).

Let us try to answer the question “ How arises this need for Avatars ? ” ; because in the minds of some, quite naturally, a difficulty does arise. The difficulty that many thoughtful people feel may be formulated thus : “ Surely the whole plan of the world is in the mind of the Logos from the beginning, and surely we cannot suppose that He is working like a human workman, not thoroughly understanding that at which He aims. He must be the architect as well as the builder ; he must make the plan as well as carry it out. He is not like the mason who puts a stone in the wall where he is told, and knows nothing of the architecture of the building to which he is contributing. He is the master-builder, the great architect of the universe, and everything in the plan of that universe must be in His mind ere ever the universe began. But if that be so—and we cannot think otherwise—how is it that the need for special intervention arises ? Does not the fact of special intervention imply some unforeseen difficulty that

has arisen ? If there must be a kind of interference with the working out of the plan, does that not look as if in the original plan some force was left out of account, some difficulty had not been seen, some thing had arisen for which preparation had not been made ? If it be not so, why the need for interference, which looks as though it were brought about to meet an unforeseen event ?" A natural, reasonable and perfectly fair question. Let us try to answer it. I do not believe in shirking difficulties ; it is better to look them in the face, and see if an answer be possible.

Now the answer comes along three different lines. There are three great classes of facts, each of which contributes to the necessity ; and each foreseen by the Logos, is definitely prepared for as needing a particular manifestation.

The first of these lines arises from what I may perhaps call the nature of things. I remarked at the beginning of this lecture on the fact that our universe, our system, is part of a greater whole, not separate, not independent, not primary, incomparatively a low scale in the universe, our sun a planet in a vaster system. Now what does that imply ? As regards matter, Prakriti, it implies that our system is builded out of matter already existing, out of matter already gifted with certain properties, out of matter that spreads through all space, and from which every Logos takes His materials, modifying it according to His own plan and according to His own will. When we speak of Moolaprakriti, the root of matter, we do not mean that it exists as the matter we know. No philosopher, no thinker, would dream of saying that that which spreads throughout space is identical with the matter of our very elementary solar system. It is the root of matter, that of which all forms of matter are merely modifications. What does that imply ? It implies that our great Lord,

who brought our solar system into existence, is taking matter which already has certain properties given to it by One yet mightier than himself. In that matter three gunas exist in equilibrium, and it is the breath of the Logos that throws them out of equilibrium, and causes the motion by which our system is brought into existence. There must be a throwing out of equilibrium, for equilibrium means Pralaya, where there is not motion, nor any manifestation of life and form. When life and form come forth, equilibrium must have been disturbed, and motion must be liberated by which the world shall be built. But the moment you grasp that truth you see that there must be certain limitations by virtue of the very material in which the Deity is working for the making of the system. It is true that when out of His system, when not conditioned and confined and limited by it, as He is by His most gracious will, it is true that He would be the Lord of that matter by virtue of His union with the mightier life beyond ; but when for the building of the world He limits Himself within His Maya, then He must work within the conditions of those materials that limit His activity, as we are told over and over again.

Now, when in the ceaseless interplay of Satwa, Rajas and Tamas, Tamas has the ascendancy, aided and, as it were, worked by Rajas, so that they predominate over Satwa in the foreseen evolution, when the two combining overpower the third, when the force of Rajas and the inertia and stubbornness of Tamas, binding themselves together, check the action, the harmony, the pleasure-giving qualities of Satwa, then comes one of the conditions in which the Lord comes forth to restore that which had been disturbed of the balanced inter-working of the three gunas, and to make again such balance between them as shall enable evolution to go forward smoothly and not

be checked in its progress. He reestablishes the balance of power which gives orderly motion, the order having been disturbed by the co-operation of the two in contradistinction to the third. In these fundamental attributes of matter, the three gunas, lies the first reason for the need of Avatars.

The second need has to do with man himself ; and now we come back in both the second and the third to that question of good and evil, of which I have already spoken. Iswara, when he came to deal with the evolution of man—with all reverence I say it—had a harder task to perform than in the evolution of the lower forms of life. On them, the Law is imposed and they must obey its impulse. On the mineral the Law is compulsory ; every mineral moves according to the law, without interposing any impulse from itself to work against the will of the one. In the vegetable world the law is imposed, and every plant grows in orderly method according to the law within it, developing steadily and in the fashion of its order, interposing no impulse of its own. Nay, in the animal world—save perhaps when we come to its highest members—the law is still a force overpowering every thing else, sweeping every thing before it, carrying along all living things. A wheel turning on the road might carry with it on its axle the fly that happened to have settled there ; it does not interpose any obstacle to the turning of the wheel. If the fly comes on to the circumference of the wheel and opposes itself to its motion, it is crushed without the slightest jarring of the wheel that rolls on, and the form goes out of existence and the life takes other shapes.

So is the wheel of law in the three lower kingdoms. But with man it is not so. In man Iswara sets himself to produce an image of himself, which is not the case in the lower kingdoms. As life has evolved, one force after

another has come out, and in man there begins to come out the central life, for the time has arrived for the evolution of the sovereign power of will, the self-initiated motion which is part of the life of the Supreme. Do not misunderstand me—for the subject is a subtle one ; there is only one will in the universe, the will of Iswara, and all must conform itself to that will, all is conditioned by that will, all must move according to that will, and that will marks out the straight line of evolution. There may be swerving neither to the right hand nor to the left. There is one will only which in its aspect to us is free, but inasmuch as our life is the life of Iswara Himself, inasmuch as there is but one Self and that Self is yours and mine as much as His—for He has given us His very Self to be our self and our life—there must evolve at one stage of this wondrous evolution that royal power of will which is seen in Him. And from the Atma within us, which is Himself in us, there flows forth the sovereign will into the sheaths in which that Atma is, as it were, held. Now what happens is this: force goes out through the sheaths and gives them some of its own nature, and each sheath begins to set up a reflection of the will on its own account, and you get the "I" of the body which wants to go this way, and the "I" of passion or emotion which wants to go that way, and the "I" of the mind which wants to go a third way, and none of these ways is the way of the Atma, the Supreme. These are the illusory wills of man, and there is one way in which you may distinguish them from the true will. Each of them is determined in its direction by external attraction ; the man's body wants to move in a particular way because something attracts it, or something else repels it ; it moves to what it likes, to what is congenial to it, it moves away from that which it dislikes, from that from which it feels itself repelled. But that motion of the body is but motion deter-

mined by the Not Self outside as it were, rather than by the self within, by the kosmos around and not by the self within, which has not yet achieved its mastery of the kosmos. So with the emotions or passions ; they are drawn this way or that by the objects of the senses, and the "senses move after their appropriate objects ;" it is not the "I", the self, which moves. And so also with the mind. "The mind is fickle and restless, O Krishna, it seems as hard to curb as the wind," and the mind lets the senses run after objects as a horse that has broken its reins flies away with the unskilled driver. All these forces are set up ; and there is one more thing to remember. These forces reinforce the rajasik guna and help to bring about that predominance of which I spoke ; all these reckless desires that are not according to the one will are yet necessary, in order that the will may evolve and in order to train and develop the man.

Do you say why ? How would you learn right if you knew not wrong ? How would you choose good if you knew not evil ? How would you recognise the light if there were no darkness ? How would you move if there were no resistance ? The forces that are called dark, the forces of the Rakshasas, of the Asuras, of all that seem to be working against Iswara—these are the forces that call out the inner strength of the Self in man, by struggling with which the forces of Atma within the man are developed, and without which he would remain in Pralaya for ever more. It is a perfectly stagnant pool where there is no motion, and there you get corruption and not life. The evolution of force can only be made by struggle, by combat, by effort, by exercise, and inasmuch as Iswara is building men and not babies. He must draw out men's forces by pulling against their strength, making them struggle in order to attain, and so vivifying into outer manifestation the life that otherwise would remain enfolded in itself. In the seed

the life his hidden, but it will not grow if you leave the seed alone. Place it on this table here, and come back a century hence, and, if you find it, it will be a seed still and nothing more. So also is the Atma in man ere evolution and struggle have begun. Plant your seed in the ground, so that the forces in the ground press on it, and the rays of the sun from outside make vibrations that work on it, and the water from the rain comes through the soil into it and forces it to swell—then the seed begins to grow ; but as it begins to grow it finds the earth around. How shall it grow but by pushing at it and so bringing out the energies of life that are within it ? And against the opposition of the ground the roots strike down, and against the opposition of the ground the growing point mounts upward, and by the opposition of the ground the forces are evolved that make the seed grow, and the little plant appears above the soil. Then the wind comes and blows and tries to drag it away, and, in order that it may live and not perish, it strikes its roots deeper and gives itself a better hold against the battering force of the wind, and so the tree grows against the forces which tries to tear it out. And if these forces were not, there would have been no growth of the root. And so with the root of Iswara, the life within us ; were everything around us smooth and easy, we should remain supine, lethargic, indifferent. It is the whip of pain, of suffering, of disappointment, that drives us onward and brings out the forces of our internal life which otherwise would remain undeveloped. Would you have a man grow, they don't throw him on a couch with pillows on every side, and bring his meals and put them into his mouth, so that he moves not limb nor exercises mind. Throw him on a desert, where there is no food nor water to be found : let the sun beat down on his head, the wind blow against him ; let his mind be made to think how to meet the necessities of the

body, and the man grows into a man and not a log. That is why there are forces which you call evil. In this universe there is no evil ; all is good that comes to us from Iswara, but it sometimes comes in the guise of evil that, by opposing it, we may draw out our strength. Then we begin to understand that these forces are necessary, and that they are within the plan of Iswara. They test evolution, they strengthen evolution, so that it does not take the next step onward till it has strength enough to hold its own, one step made firm by opposition before the next is taken. But when, by the conflicting wills of men, the forces that work for retardation, to keep a man back till he is able to overcome them and go on when they are so reinforced by men's unruly wishes that they are beginning, as it were, to threaten progress, then ere that check takes places, there is reinforcement from the other side. The presence of the Avatara of the forces that threaten evolution calls forth the presence of the Avatara that leads to the progress of humanity.

We come to the third cause. The Avatara does not come forth without a call. The earth, it is said, is very heavy with its load of evil : "Save us O Supreme Lord," the Devas come and cry. In answer to that cry the Lord comes forth. But what is this that I spoke of purposely by a strange phrase to catch your attention, that I spoke of as an "Avatara of evil" ? By the will of the one Supreme, there is one incarnated in form who gathers up together the forces that make for retardation, in order that, thus gathered together, they may be destroyed by the opposing force of good, and thus the balance may be re-established and evolution go on along its appointed road. Devas work for joy, the reward of Heaven. Svarga is their home, and they serve the Supreme for the joys that there they have. Rakshasas also serve Him, for rule on earth, and

power to grasp and hold and enjoy as they will in this lower world. Both sides serve for reward and are moved by the things that please.

And in order, as our time is drawing to a close, that I may take one great example to show how these work, let me take the mighty one, Ravana of Lanka, that we may give a concrete form to a rather difficult and abstruse thought. Ravana, as you all know, was the mighty intelligence, the Rakshasa, who called forth the coming of Sree Rama. But look back into the past and what was he ? Keeper of Vishnu's Heaven, door-keeper of the mighty Lord, devotee, bhakta, absolutely devoted to the Lord. Look at his past, and where do you find a bhakta of Mahadeva more absolute in devotion than the one who came forth later as Ravana ? It was he who cast his head into the fire in order that Mahadeva might be served. It is he in whose name have been written some of the most exquisite stotras, breathing the spirit of completest devotion ; in one of them, you may remember—and you could scarcely carry devotion to a further point—it is into the mouth of Ravana words are put appealing to Mahadeva, and describing Him as surrounded by forms the most repellent and undesirable, surrounded on every side by Pisachas and Bhootas, which to us seem but the embodiment of the dark shadows of the burning ghat, forms whence all beauty is withdrawn. He cries out in a passion of love.

Better wear pisacha-form, so we
Evermore are near and with Thee.

How did he then come to be the ravisher of Seeta and the enemy of God ?

You know how through lack of intuition, through lack of power to recognise the meaning of an order, following the word not the spirit, following the outer not the inner, he refused to open the door of Heaven when Sanat Kumara

came and demanded entrance. In order that that which was lacking might be filled, in order that that which was wanting might be earned, that which was called a curse was pronounced, a curse which was the natural re-action from the mistake. He was asked : " Will you have seven incarnations friendly to Vishnu, or three in which you will be His enemy and oppose Him ? " ; and because he was a true bhakta, and because every moment of absence from his Lord meant to him a hell of torture, he chose three of enmity, which would let him go back sooner to the Feet of the Beloved, rather than the seven of happiness, of friendliness. Better a short time of utter enmity than a longer remaining away with apparent happiness. It was love, not hatred, that made him choose the form of a Rakshasa rather than the form of a Rishi. There is the first note of explanation.

Then coming into the form of Rakshasa, he must do his duty as Rakshasa. This was no weak man to be swayed by momentary thought, by transient objects. He had all the learning of the Vedas. With him, it was said, passed away vaidik learning ; with him it disappeared from earth. He knew his duty. What was his duty ? To put forward every force which was in his mighty nature in order to check evolution, and so call out every force in man which could be called out by opposing energy which had to be overcome ; to gather round him all the forces which were opposing evolution ; to make himself king of the whole, centre and law-giver to every force that was setting itself against the will of the Lord ; to gather them as it were into one head, to call them together into one arm ; so that when their apparent triumph made the cry of the earth go up to Vishnu, the answer might come in Rama's Avatar and they be destroyed, that the life-wave might go on.

Nobly he did the work, thoroughly he discharged his

duty. It is said that even sages are confused about Dharma, and truly it is subtle and hard to grasp in its entirety, though the fragment the plain man sees be simple enough. His Dharma was the Dharma of a Rakshasa, to lead the whole forces of evil against one whom, in his inner soul, then clouded, he loved. When Sree Rama came, when he was wandering in the forest, how could he sting him into leaving the life of his life, his beloved Sita, and into coming out into the world to do His work ? By taking away from him the one thing to which he clung, by taking away from him the wife whom he loved as His very Self, by placing her in the spot where all the forces of the evil were gathered together, so making one head for destruction, which the arrow of Sree Rama might destroy. Then the mighty battle, then the struggle with all the forces of his great nature, that the law might be obeyed to the uttermost, duly fulfilled to the last grain, the debt paid that was owed and then—ah then ! the shaft of the Beloved, then the arrow of Sree Rama that struck off the head from the seeming enemy, from the real devotee. And from the corpse of the Rakshasa that fell upon the field near Lanka, the devotee went up to Goloka to sit at the feet of the Beloved, and rest for a while till the third incarnation had to be lived out.

Such then are some of the reasons, by which the coming of the Avataras is brought about.—*The Avatars*, pp. 46—61.

P. 282, *The Spot*.—For Kama, again, is in the *Rig Veda* the personification of that feeling which leads and propels to creation. He was the *First Movement* that stirred the ONE, after its manifestation from the purely Abstract Principle, to create.

“ Desire first arose in It, which was the Primal Germ of Mind ; and which Sages, searching with their intellect, have discovered to be the bond which connects Entity with Non-Entity.”

A Hymn in the *Atharva Veda* exalts Kama into a supreme God and Creator, and says:—

“ Kama was born the first. Him, neither Gods nor Fathers (Pitrīs) nor Men have equalled.”

The *Atharva Veda* identifies him with Agni, but makes him superior to that God. The *Taittireeya Brahmana* makes him allegorically the son of Dharma (moral religious duty, piety and justice) and of Sraddha (faith). Elsewhere Kama is born from the heart of Brahma ; therefore he is Atmabhu “ Self-Existent,” and Aja, the “ Unborn.” As Eros was connected in early Greek mythology with the world’s creation, and only afterwards became the sexual Cupid, so was Kama in his original Vedic character ; the *Harivamsa* making him a son of Lakshmi, who is Venus. — *Secret Doctrine Vol. II*, pp. 185 and 186.

The Dolphin, as every Mythologist knows, was placed, for his service, by Poseidon, among the constellations, and became with the Greeks, Capricornus, the Goat, whose hind part is that of a dolphin, and is thus identical with Makara, whose head is also that of an antelope and the body and tail those of a fish. This is why the sign of the Makara was borne on the banner of Kamadeva, the Hindu God of Love, identified, in the *Atharva Veda*, with Agni, the Fire-God, the son of Lakshmi, as correctly given by the *Harivamsa*. For Lakshmi and Venus are one, and Amphitrite is the early form of Venus. Now Kama, the Makaraketu, is Aja, the “unborn,” and Atmabhu, the “self-existent,” and Aja is the Logos in the *Rig Veda*, as he is shown therein to be the first manifestation of the One ; for “ Desire first arose in it, which was the primal germ of mind,” that “ which connects entity with non-entity”—or Manas, the *fifth*, with Atma, the *seventh*, Esoterically—say the sages. This is the *first stage*.—*Ibid.* pp. 611 and 612.

Siva sits in austere tapas on a part of Mount Himavan, whose blooming daughter Uma visits the place daily to keep it clean and tidy. Siva is firm in his austerity, although such a beautiful damsel moves about him. The Devas think that if this great tapasvin can be induced to fall in love with Uma and marry her, the son born will be fit to be their General. At their request, Kama, the god of love, goes and stationing himself at some distance from Siva, discharges his flowery arrows at him, just when Uma is before him. Thus struck, he feels bewitched by her; but he recovers himself, and looking round, notices Cupid and burns him down by the fire of his third eye, which is located in his forehead. Rati, Enjoyment, the spouse of Kama, bewails his loss, but a heavenly voice consoles her, saying that in course of time Siva will marry Uma, and that when that event takes place Siva will resuscitate Kama. Uma has a mind to marry Siva, but as he becomes a very rigid tapasvin, she repairs to another part of the mountain and sits there in fervent tapas for many days. At last Siva is pleased to appear before her in the form of a Bhikshu, religious mendicant, and says that if she has a mind to enter into wedlock she may marry any but that houseless, penniless, ill-clad beggar Siva. This rouses her anger and makes her very eloquent and pretty in the defence of the real greatness of Siva whom ignorant men cannot know. At this juncture the Bhikshu reveals himself to be no other but her Siva, who has, he says, been conquered by her tapas, and come to propose to her in person. She feels surprised and shy, and says that he should obtain her father's consent. The Seven Rishis most gladly mediate and obtain the consent, which is readily given ; and the wedding takes place. The resuscitated Kama obtains full liberty from Siva to discharge his arrows at him. But no son is born for many years, and the Devas, who are very

impatient for the birth of their Senanya, send Agni, who takes up the form of a Kapota (dove), and appears before the couple. Uma finds out the dove to be Agni in disguise and retires by reason of his intrusion upon her secrecy, while the Tejas of Siva is born as Kumara in the manner stated in the Ramayana. Ultimately Kumara becomes the Senanya of the Devas and kills Asura Taraka.—*Indo-Aryan Mythology—Part II*, pp. 76, 77.

Page 253. *Asura Vritra* :—Indra's running away after killing the serpent Vritra is described in the Rig Veda I. 32 ; 14, which says that when Indra slew the dragon, fear possessed his heart and he flew like an affrighted hawk through the regions, crossing nine and ninety flowing rivers.

Although Indra is well-known as the killer of the three-headed Visvaroopa, the son of the creater Twashta (R. V. X. viii, 9), still in *Ib.* II, 11, 19, it is said that Indra gave up Visvaroopa to Trita (evidently for the purpose of Trita's beating him). The Satapatha Brahmana above referred to says that, when Indra fought with the three-headed Visvaroopa, it was Indra's ally Trita who beat him over and over and killed him, and that as he thereby incurred sin, the rite of washing the flour-pot was invented in order to wash off that sin.

The Maruts reinforced the power and strength of Trita and Indra, in their battle with Vritra (*Ib.* VIII. 7, 24.)

The feat of killing the demon Vritra is in many places attributed to the Sun Indra, but sometimes also to Trita ; for, *Ib.* I. 187, 1 is to the effect that invigorated by Pitu, the Soma drink, Trita rent Vritra limb from limb. Sayana explains Trita of this verse to mean Indra as a God who pervades the Three Worlds. But this well-known feat of Indra's killing Vritra is attributed in IX, 37, 5 to Soma also, as Indra does the feat invigorated by the Soma drink.

Thus, Indra, Soma and the three-fold Agni Trita are all the killers of darkness, ignorance.....

According to the Taitt Samhita II. 5, 1 and 2, Visvaroopa, son of Twashta, was Purohita, (priest), to the Devas, and sister's son to the Asuras ; he had three heads called Somapana, Surapana, and Annadana (Soma-drinking, Sura-drinking, and Food-eating) ; he declared bhaga or share in the oblations outwardly to the Devas, but inwardly to the Asuras ; Indra therefore cut of his heads ; by killing him, the sin of Brahmahatya came to Indra, who received it in his palms and went about, accosted by all the creatures as Brahmahan (the killer of a Brahmana), but he disposed of the sin (in a manner which need not be mentioned here); Twashta then performed a Soma sacrifice without inviting Indra, but Indra came, took the Soma by force and drank the greater portion of it ; the portion that was left was offered by Twashta into the fire, from which Vritra arose, and grew on all sides arrow-length by arrow-length (ishumatram ishumatram); afraid of him, Indra ran to Prajapati, obtained from him the Vajra weapon sprinkled over (with sacred water), and killed Vritra with it. The Ait-Brahmana VII, 28 says that the Devas excluded Indra, a Kshatriya god, from participation in the Soma beverage because he killed Twashta's son Visvaroopa and Vritra, threw Yatis before wolves, killed the Arurmaghas and rebuked (his teacher) Brihaspati, but that Indra took the Soma by force (and thereby established his right to get it in all the sacrifices). The Satapatha-Brahmana 1, 2, 3, 1 (quoted in the Vachaspatya under the word Ekata) says that, being a god, Indra was able to free himself from, or get over, the sin of killing Visvaroopa, but that Ekata, Dvita, and Trita, who abetted the killing, had to perform a certain rite in order to get rid of the sin.

In the Rig-Veda, Indra is one of the greatest gods and

the most popular one. Far from his killing Vritra being a demerit or a sinful act, he is praised in it for having done so, and gets the Soma most solemnly offered to him. In all the sacrifices described in the Taitt Samhita and all the Brahmanas, Indra maintains his Rig-Vedic eminence, in spite of the silly looking things said in them in the shape of legends about him.....

In the Rig Veda there seems to be nothing in the shape of a definite plot that because the sun Indra killed Visvaroopa, Vritra was created and had to be killed. Vritra is sometimes described in it as a serpent, and several Vritras are mentioned in the neutral plural *Vritrani*. Although Vritra seems to be the darkness-serpent, he is sometimes indentified with the moon, the Lord of night, for the Satap-brahmana quoted in *Muir's Texts*, V. p. 96, says that Indra is the Sun and Vritra the moon.....

Rig Veda I. 32, 14 is echoed by Bharata, Aranya-parva, 101 where Indra was possessed by fear as soon as he killed Vritra ; he ran away and hid himself in water, as if he would not believe that the Vajra weapon had at all been hurled and Vritra killed by him.

Ib. VIII, 14, 13, says that Indra cut off Namuchi's head with the foam of the waters and this makes Vritra and Namuchi to be one.....

The Vachaspatya dictionary gives *darkness* as the very first meaning of the word Vritra.

Rig Veda, IV, 18, 11 ; VIII, 82, 12 say " And Indra's mother sought to draw back the mighty Indra saying, ' My son ! These gods forsake thee.' Then Indra, being about to slay Vritra, said, ' Friend Vishnu, do thou stride vastly'."

The Ait-brahmana VI, 24-28 contains the following story about these Valakhilya-sooktas:—" The gods after having perceived the cows to be in the cavern, wished to obtain them by means of a sacrifice. They obtained them

by means of the sixth day. They bored at the morning libation the cavern with the bore-mantra (*nabhaka*). After having succeeded in making an opening, they loosened the stones, and then, at the third libation, broke up the cavern by means of the Valakhilya hymns, with the Ekapada as *Vachah Koota*, which served as a weapon and drove the cows out."...

The original for the cavern is *Vala*. In the Rig Veda, *Vala* occurs as a demon, whose cavern containing the cows is broken by Indra (I. 11, 5). According to Mr. Griffith "Vala is the brother of Vritra or Vritra himself under another name, who stole the cows of the gods and hid them in a cave." Vritra was *Ahi*, snake, lying on the mountain ; killing him Indra freed the waters (I. 32, 1).

The good aspect of Vritra is indicated when the Vajasaneyins say about him thus :—"In Vritra were contained all the gods, all the sciences, and all oblations".—*Essays on Indo-Aryan Mythology*, Vol. I. pp. 140, 168, 247, 347 ; II. 167, 265.

Even the Puranic writers have ingeniously interwoven allegory with cosmic facts and human events. Any symbolist may discern their astro-cosmical allusions, even though he be unable to grasp the whole meaning. The great "wars in heaven" in the Puranas ; the wars of the Titans in the Hesiod and other classical writers ; the "struggles" also between Osiris and Typhon, in the Egyptian myth ; and even those in the Scandinavian legends ; all refer to the same subject. Northern mythology refers to it as the battle of the flames, the sons of Muspel who fought on the field of Wigred. All these relate to Heaven and Earth, and have a double, and often even a triple meaning and esoteric application to things above as to things below. They severally relate to astronomical, theogonical and human struggles ; to the adjustment of orbs, and the supremacy among nations.

and tribes. The "struggles for existence" and the "survival of the fittest" reigned supreme from the moment that Kosmos entered into being and could hardly escape the observant eye of the ancient Sages. Hence, the incessant fights of Indra, the God of the Firmament, with the Asuras—degraded from high Gods into Cosmic Demons—and with Vritra or Ahi; the battles fought between stars and constellations, between moons and planets—later on incarnated as kings and mortals. Hence also the war in Heaven of Michael and his Host against the Dragon-Jupiter and Lucifer-Venus—when a third of the stars of the rebellious Host was hurled down into space, and "its place was found no more in Heaven."—*Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I. p. 225.

Read the account of Indra (Vayu) in the *Rig Veda*, the Occult volume *par excellence* of Aryanism, and then compare it with the same in the *Puranas*—the exoteric version thereof, and the purposely garbled account of the true Wisdom Religion. In the *Rig Veda*, Indra is the highest and greatest of the Gods, and his Soma-drinking is allegorical of his highly spiritual nature. In the *Puranas*, Indra becomes a profligate, and a regular drunkard of the Soma juice, in the ordinary terrestrial way. He is the conqueror of all the "enemies of the Gods" the Daityas, Nagas (Serpents), Asuras, all the serpent-gods, and of Vritra, the Comic Serpent. Indra is the St. Michael of the Hindu Pantheon—the chief of the *militant* Host. Turning to the *Bible*, we find Satan, one of the "sons of God" becoming in exoteric interpretation the Devil, and the Dragon, in its infernal, evil sense. But in the *Kabbalah* Samael, who is Satan, is shown to be identical with St. Michael the slayer of the Dragon. How is this, when it is said that Iselam (the Image) reflects alike Michael and Samael, who are one? Both proceed, it is taught, from Rauch

(spirit), Neshamah (Soul) and Nephesh (Life). In the Chaldaean *Book of Numbers* Samael is the concealed (Occult) wisdom, and Michael the higher *terrestrial* wisdom, both emanating from the same source, but diverging after their issue from the Mundane Soul, which on Earth is Mahat, intellectual understanding, or Manas, the seat of intellect. They diverge, because the one (Michael) is *influenced* by Neshamah, while the other (Samael) remains *uninfluenced*. This tenet was perverted by the dogmatic spirit of the Church, which, loathing independent spirit, uninfluenced by the external form, hence by dogma, forthwith made of Samael-Satan—the most wise and spiritual spirit of all—the Adversary of its anthropomorphic God and sensual physical man, the Devil !

The origin of the new Satanic myth is easy to trace. The tradition of the Dragon and the sun is echoed in every part of the world, both in its civilized and semi-savage regions. It took rise in the whisperings about secret Initiations among the profane, and was once universally established through the formerly universal heliolatrous religion. There was a time when the four parts of the world were covered with the temples sacred to the Sun and the Dragon; but the cult is now preserved mostly in China and Buddhist countries.

Bel and the Dragon being uniformly coupled together, and the priest of the Ophite religion as uniformly assuming the name of his God. (*Archaeology* XXV, 220 London).

Among the religions of the past, it is in Egypt we have to seek for its western origin. The Ophites adopted their rites from Hermes Trismegistus, and heliolatrous worship with its Sun-gods crossed over into the land of the Pharaohs from India. In the gods of Stonehenge we recognise the divinities of Delphi and Babylon, and in those of the latter the Devas of the Vedic nations. Bel and the Dragon

Apollo and Python, Krishna and Kaliya, Osiris and Typhon, are all one under many names—the latest of which are Michael and the Red Dragon, and St. George and his Dragon. As Michael is “one as God,” or his “Double” for terrestrial purposes, and is one of the Elohim, the fighting Angel, he is thus simply a permutation of Jehovah. Whatever the cosmic or astronomical event that first gave rise to the allegory of the “War in Heaven,” its earthly origin has to be sought in the temples of Initiation and archaic crypts ; and the proof is that we find (a) the priests assuming the name of the Gods they served ; (b) the “Dragons” held throughout all antiquity as the symbols of Immortality and wisdom, of secret knowledge and of eternity ; and (c) the Hierophants of Egypt, of Babylon, and India, styling themselves generally the “Sons of the Dragon” and “Serpents ;” thus corroborating the teachings of the Secret Doctrine.

There were numerous catacombs in Egypt and Chaldaea, some of them of a very vast extent. The most renowned of these were the subterranean crypts of Thebes and Memphis. The former, beginning on the western side of the Nile, extended towards the Lybian desert, and were known as the serpents, catacombs, or passages. It was there that were performed the Sacred Mysteries of the Kuklos Anagkas, the “Unavoidable Cycle,” more generally known as the “Circle of Necessity”—the inexorable doom imposed upon every soul after bodily death, when it has been judged in the Amentian region.

In De Bourbourg’s book, *Votan*, the Mexican Demi-God, in narrating his expedition, describes a subterranean passage which ran on underground, and terminated at the root of the heavens, adding that this passage was a snake’s hole, and that he was admitted to it because he was himself a “Son of the Snakes,” or a Serpent (*Die Phoinizier*, 70).

This is, indeed, very suggestive ; for his description of the "Snake's hole" is that of the ancient Egyptian crypt, as above mentioned. The Hierophants, moreover, of Egypt, and also of Babylon, generally styled themselves during the Mysteries, the " Sons of the serpent-god," or " Sons of the Dragon."

" The Assyrian priest always bore the name of his God," says Movers. The Druids of the Celto-Britannic regions also called themselves snakes. " I am a Serpent, I am a Druid," they exclaimed. The Egyptian Karnak is twin brother to the Carnac of Bretagne, the latter Carnac meaning the Serpent's Mount. The Dracontia once covered the surface of the globe, and these temples were sacred to the Dragon, only because it was the symbol of the Sun, which, in its turn, was the symbol of the Highest God—the Phoenician Elon or Elion, whom Abraham recognized as El Elion (See Sanchuniathan in Eusebins, *Pr. Ev.* 36; *Genesis*, XIV). Besides the surname of Serpents, they had also the appellation of " Builders" or " Architects", for the immense grandeur of their temples and monuments was such that even now the pulverized remains of them "frighten the mathematical calculations of our modern engineers," as Taliesin says (*Society of Antiquaries of London*, XXV. 220).

De Bourbourg hints that the chiefs of the name of Votan, the Quetzo Cohuatl, or Serpent deity of the Mexicans, are the descendants of Ham and Canaan. " I am Hivim," they say. " Being a Hivim, I am of the great race of the Dragon (Snake). I am a Snake myself, for I am a Hivim (*Cartas*, 51; see *Isis Unveiled* i. 533, *et seq.*)."

Further more, the " War in Heaven" is shown, in one of its significations, to have referred to those terrible struggles in store for the candidate for Adeptship—struggles between himself and his (by Magic) personified human passions, when the enlightened *Inner Man*

had to either slay them or fail. In the former case he became the "Dragon-Slayer", as having happily overcome all the temptations, and a "Son of the Serpent" and a serpent himself, having cast off his old skin and being born in a *new* body, becoming a Son of Wisdom and Immortality in Eternity. Seth, the reputed forefather of Israel, is only a Jewish travesty of Hermes, the God of Wisdom, called also Thoth, Tat, Seth, Set, and Satan. He is also Typhon, the same as Apophis, the Dragon slain by Horus ; for Typhon was also called Set. He is simply the *dark side* of Osiris, his brother, as Angra Mainyu is the black shadow of Ahura Mazda. Terrestrially, all these allegories were connected with the trials of Adeptship and Initiation. Astronomically, they referred to the Solar and Lunar eclipses, the mythical explanations of which we find to this day in India and Ceylon, where any one can study the allegorical narratives and traditions which have remained unchanged for many thousands of years.

Rahu, mythologically, is a Daitya—a Giant, a Demi-God, the lower part of whose body ended in a Dragon's or Serpent's tail. During the churning of the ocean, when the Gods produced the Amrita, the Water of Immortality, he stole some of it, and, drinking, became immortal. The Sun and Moon, who had detected him in his theft, denounced him to Vishnu, who placed him in the stellar spheres, the upper portion of his body representing the Dragon's head and the lower (Ketu) the Dragon's tail, the two being the ascending and descending nodes. Since then, Rahu wreaks his vengeance on the Sun and Moon by occasionally swallowing them. But this fable has another mystic meaning, for Rahu, the Dragon's head, played a prominent part in the Mysteries of Sun's (Vikartana's) Initiation, when the Candidate and the Dragon had a supreme fight.

The caves of the Rishis, the abodes of Teiresias and the Greek seers, were modelled on those of the Nagas—the Hindu King-Snakes, who dwelt in cavities of the rocks under the ground. From Sesha, the thousand-headed Serpent, on which Vishnu rests, down to Python, the Dragon-serpent oracle, all point to the secret meaning of the myth. In India we find the fact mentioned in the earliest *Puranas*. The children of Surasa are the mighty “Dragons.” The *Vayu Purana* replacing the “Dragons” of Surasa of the *Vishnu Purana* by the Danavas, the descendants of Danu by the sage Kasyapa, and these Danavas being the Giants, or Titans, who warred against the Gods, they are thus shown identical with the “Dragons” and “Serpents” of Wisdom.

We have only to compare the Sun-Gods of every country, to find their allegories agreeing perfectly with each other ; and the more the allegorical symbol is Occult the more its corresponding symbol in exoteric systems agrees with it. Thus, if from three systems widely differing from each other in appearance—the old Aryan, the ancient Greek, and the modern Christian schemes—several Sun-gods and Dragons are selected at random, they will be found to be copied from each other.

Let us take Agni the Fire-god, Indra the fir-mament, and Kartikeya from the Hindus ; the Greek Apollo ; and Michael, the “Angel of the Sun,” the first of the Aeons, called by the Gnostics the “Saviour”—and proceed in order.

(i) Agni, the Fire-god, is called Vaisvanara in the *Rig Veda*. Now Vaisvanara is a Danava, a Giant-demon. (He is thus named and included in the list of Danavas in *Vayu Purana* ; the commentator of *Bhagavata Purana* calls him a son of Danu, but the name means also “Spirit of Humanity”), whose daughters Puloma and Kalaka are

the mothers of numberless Danavas (30 millions), by Kasyapa [Kasyapá is called the son of Brahma, and is the "self-born" to whom a great part of the work of creation is attributed. He is one of the seven Rishis; exoterically, the son of Marichi, the son of Brahma; while the *Atharva Veda* says, "The self-born Kasyapa sprang from Time," and *Exoterically* Time and space are forms of the One *incognizable* Deity. As an Aditya, Indra is son of Kasyapa, as also Vaivasvata Manu, our Progenitor. In the instance given in the text, he is Kasyapa-Aditya, the sun and the sun-god, from whom all the "cosmic" Demons, Dragons (Nagas), serpent or snake-gods, and Danavas or Giants, are born. The meaning of the allegories given above is purely astronomical and cosmical, but will serve to prove the identity of all] and live in Hiranyapura, "*the golden city, floating in the air.*" Therefore Indra is, in a fashion, the step-son of these two as a son of Kasyapa; and Kasyapa is, in this sense, identical with Agni, the Fire-god, or Sun (Kasyapa-Aditya). To this same group belongs Skanda or Kartikeya, God of War, the *six-faced* planet Mars astronomically, a Kumara, or Virgin-Youth, born of Agni. [All such stories differ in the *exoteric* texts. In the *Mahabharata*, Kartikeya, "the six-faced Mars," is the son of Rudra or Siva, self-born *without a mother* from the seed of Siva cast into the fire. But Kartikeya is generally called Agni-bhu, "Fire-born"] for the purpose of destroying Taraka, the Danava Demon, the grandson of Kasyapa by his son Hiranyaksha [the ruler or king of the *fifth* region of Patala, a Snake-god]. Taraka's Yoga austerities were so extraordinary that they became formidable to the Gods, who feared such a rival in power. [The Elohim also feared the knowledge of Good and Evil for Adam, and therefore are shown as expelling him from Eden or killing him *spiritually*]. While Indra, the bright God of the Firmament,

kills Vritra, or Ahi, the Serpent-Demon—for which feat he is called Vritra-han, the “Destroyer of Vritra”—he also leads the hosts of Devas (Angels or Gods) against other Gods who rebel against Brahma, for which he is sur-named Jishnu, “Leader of the Celestial Host.” Kartikeya is also found bearing the same titles. For killing Taraka, the Danava, he is called Taraka-Jit, “Vanquisher of Taraka.” [The story told is, that Taraka (called also Kalanabha), owing to his extraordinary Yoga-powers, had obtained all the divine knowledge of Yoga-vidya and the occult powers of the Gods, who conspired against him. Here we see, the “obedient” Host of Archangels or minor Gods conspiring against the (future) Fallen Angels, whom Enoch accuses of the great crime of disclosing to the world all “*the secret things done in heaven.*” It is Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Suryal and Uriel who denounced to the Lord God those of their Brethren who were said to have pried into the divine mysteries and taught them to men; by this means they themselves escaped a like punishment. Michael was commissioned to fight the Dragon, and so was Kartikeya, and under the same circumstances. Both are “Leaders of the Celestial Host,” both Virgins, both “Leaders of Saints,” “Spear-holders” (Sakti-dharas), etc. Kartikeya is the original of Michael and St. George, as surely as Indra is the prototype of Kartikeya.], Kumara-Guha, the “mysterious Virgin-youth,” Siddha-sena, “Leader of the Siddhas,” and Sakti-dhara, “Spear-holder.”

(2) Now take Apollo, the Grecian Sun-god, and by comparing the mythical accounts given of him, see whether he does not answer both to Indra, Kartikeya, and even Kasyapa-Aditya, and at the same time to Michael (as the Angelic form of Jehovah) the “Angel of the Sun,” who is “like,” and “one with, God”. Later ingenious interpretations for monotheistic purposes, elevated though they be

into not-to-be-questioned church dogmas, prove nothing, except, perhaps, the abuse of human authority and power.

Apollo is Helios, the Sun, Phœbos-Apollo, the "Light of Life and of the World," [The "life and light" of the material *physical* world, the delight of the senses—not of the soul. Apollo is pre-eminently the *human* God, the God of emotional, pomp-loving and theatrical church ritualism, with lights and music] who arises out of the Golden-winged Cup (the Sun); hence he is the Sun-God *par excellence*. At the moment of his birth he asks for his bow to kill Python, the Demon Dragon, who attacked his mother before his birth [see *Revelation*, xii where we find Apollo's mother persecuted by the Python, the Red Dragon, who is also Porphyron, the scarlet or red Titan]; and whom he is divinely commissioned to destroy like Kartikeya, who is born for the purpose of killing Taraka, the *too holy and wise* Demon. Apollo is born on a sidereal island called Asteria—the "golden star island," the "earth which floats in the air," which is the Hindu golden Hiranyapura; he is called the Pure Agnus Dei, the Indian Agni, as Dr. Kenelby thinks; and in the primal myth he is exempt "from all sensual love" (*Book of God*, p. 88). He is, therefore, a Kumara, like Kartikeya, and as Indra was in his earlier life and biographies. Python, moreover, the "red Dragon," connects Apollo, with Michael, who fights the Apocalyptic Dragon, seeking to attack the woman in child-birth, as Python attacks Apollo's mother. Can any one fail to see the identity?.....

(3) The repetition of this archaic tradition is found in chapter xii of St. John's *Revelation*, and comes from the Babylonian legends, without the smallest doubt, though the Babylonian story, in its turn, had its origin in the allegories of the Aryans. The fragment read by the late George Smith is sufficient to disclose the source of this chapter

of the Apocalypse. Here it is as given by the eminent Assyriologist.

Our.....fragment refers to the creation of mankind, called Adam, as [the man] in the Bible ; he is made perfect,..... but afterwards he joins with the dragon of the deep, the animal of Tiamat, the spirit of chaos, and offends against his god, who *curses him* and calls down on his head all the evils and troubles of humanity. [No "God"—Whether called Bel or Jehovah—who curses his (supposed) own work, because he has made it imperfect, can be the One Infinite Absolute Wisdom].

This is followed by a war between the dragon and the powers of evil, or chaos on one side and the gods on the other.

The gods have weapons forged for them [In the Indian allegory of Tarakamaya, the war between the gods and the Asuras headed by Soma (the Moon, the king of plants), it is Visvakarma, the artificer of the Gods, who, like Vulcan (Tubal-cain), forges their weapons for them], and Merodach [the Archangel Michael in *Revelation*] undertakes to lead the heavenly host against the dragon. The war, which is described with spirit, ends of course in the triumph of the principles of good [We have said elsewhere that the "woman with child" of *Revelation* was Uma the Great Mother, or, Binah, the third Sephira, "whose name is Jehovah" ; and the "Dragon", who seeks to devour her coming child (the Universe), is the Dragon of Absolute Wisdom—that Wisdom which, recognizing the non-separatedness of the Universe and everything in it from the Absolute All, sees in it no better than the great Illusion, Mahamaya, hence the cause of misery and suffering (*Chaldean Account of Genesis*, p. 304)].

This war of the Gods with the powers of the Deep refers also, in its last and terrestrial application, to the struggle between the Aryan Adepts of the nascent Fifth Race

and the Sorcerers of Atlantis, the Demons of the Deep, the Islanders surrounded with water who disappeared in the Deluge.

The symbols of the "Dragon" and War in Heaven "have, as already stated, more than one significance ; religious, astronomical and geological events being included in the one common allegory. But they had also a cosmological meaning. In India the Dragon story is repeated in one of its forms in the battles of Indra with Vritra. In the *Vedas* this Ahi-Vritra is referred to as the Demon of Drought, the terrible hot wind. Indra is shown to be constantly at war with him ; and with the help of his thunder and lightning the God compels Ahi-Vritra to pour down in rain on earth, and then slays him. Hence, Indra is called the Vritra-han or the "Slayer of Vritra", as Michael is called the conqueror and "Slayer of the Dragon". Both these "Enemies" are then the "Old Dragon" precipitated into the depths of the Earth, in this one sense.

The Avestaic Amshaspands are a Host with a leader like St. Michael over them, and seem identical with the legions of Heaven, to judge from the account in the *Vendidad*. Thus in Fargard xix, Zarathushtra is told by Ahura Mazda to "invoke the Amesha Spentas who rule over the seven Karshvares [The "seven Karshvares of the earth"—the seven spheres of our Planetary chain, the seven worlds, also mentioned in the *Rig Veda*, are fully referred to elsewhere. There are six Rajamsi (Worlds) above Prithivi, the Earth, or "this" (Idam), as opposed to that which is *yonder* (the six Globes on the three other planes)] of the Earth ;" (see *Rig Veda*, i. 34 ; iii. 56 ; vii. 10411 ; v. 60. 6 ; Darmesteter's Trans., "Sacred Books of the East", vol. iv, p. 207)], which Karshvares in their seven applications refer equally to the seven spheres of our Planetary chain, to the seven Planets, the seven Heavens, etc.,

according to whether the sense is applied to a physical, supra-mundane, or simply a sidereal world. In the same Fargard, in his invocation against Angra Mainyu and his Host, Zarathushtra appeals to them in these words: "I invoke the seven bright Sravah with their sons and their flocks." (*Ibid.*, p. 217) The "Sravah"—a word which the Orientalist have given up as one "of unknown meaning"—means the same Amshaspands, but in their highest Occult meaning. The Sravah are the Noumenoi of the phenomenal Amshaspands, the Souls or Spirits of those *manifested* Powers; and "their sons and their flocks" refer to the Planetary Angels and their sideral flocks of stars and constellations. "Amshaspand" is the exoteric term used in terrestrial combinations and affairs only. Zarathushtra addresses Ahura Mazda constantly as the "maker of the material world." Ormazzd is the father of our Earth (Spenta Armaiti), who is referred to, when personified, as "the fair daughter of Ahura Mazda," (*Ibid.*, p. 208) who is also the creator of the Tree (of Occult and Spiritual knowledge and wisdom) from which the mystic and mysterious Baresma is taken. But the Occult name of the bright God was never pronounced outside the temple.

Samael or Satan the seducing Serpent of *Genesis*, and one of the primeval Angels who rebelled, is the name of the "Red Dragon." He is the Angel of Death, for the *Talmud* says that "the Angel of Death and Satan are the same." He is killed by Michael, and once more killed by St. George, who also is a Dragon Slayer. But see the transformations of this. Samael is identical with the Simoom, the hot wind of the desert, or again with the Vedic Demon of Drought, as Vritra; "Simoom is called Atabutos" or—Diabolos, the Devil.

Typhon, or the Dragon Apophis—the Accuser in the *Book of the Dead*—is worsted by Horus, who pierces his

opponent's head with a spear ; and Typhon is the all-destroying wind of the desert, the rebellious element that throws everything into confusion. As Set, he is the darkness of night, the murderer of Osiris, who is the light of day and the Sun. Archæology demonstrates that Horus is identical with Anubis [*Book of the Dead*, xvii. 62 ; Anubis is Horus who melts "in him who is eyeless"] whose effigy was discovered upon an Egyptian monument, with a cuirass and a spear, like Michael and St. George. Anubis is also represented as slaying a Dragon that has the head and tail of a serpent. (See Lenoir's *Du Dragon de Metz*).

Cosmologically, then, all the Dragons and serpents conquered by their "Slayers" are, in their origin, the turbulent confused principles in Chaos, brought to order by the Sun-gods or *Creative Powers*. In the *Book of the Dead* those principles are called the "Sons of Rebellion." (See also *Egyptian Pantheon*, pp. 20, 23).

"In that night, the oppresser, the murderer of Osiris, otherwise called the *deceiving Serpent*.....calls the sons of Rebellion in *Air*, and when they arrive to the East of the Heavens, then there is war in Heaven and in the entire world" *Book of the Dead*, xvii, 54 and 49).

In the Scandinavian *Eddas* the "war" of the Ases with the Hrimthurses or Frost giants, and of Asathor with the Jotuns, the serpents and Dragons and the "Wolf" who comes out of "Darkness"—is the repetition of the same myth. The "evil spirits" [These "Evil Spirits" can by no means be identified with Satan or the Great Dragon. They are the elementals generated or begotten by ignorance—cosmic and human passions—or Chaos], who began by being simply the emblems of Chaos, have become euhemerized by the superstition of the rabble until they have finally won the right of the citizenship in what are claimed to be the most civilized and learned races of this globe

since its creation, and have become a dogma with Christians. As George Smith has it :

"The evil principles (spirits), emblems of chaos (in Chaldæa and Assyria as in Egypt, we see),.....resist this change and make war on the Moon, the eldest son of Bel, drawing over to their side the Sun, Venus and the atmospheric god Vul." (*Assyrian Discoveries*, p. 403).

This is only another version of the Hindu "War in Heaven," between Soma, the Moon, and the Gods ; Indra being the atmospheric Vul—which shows it plainly to be both a cosmogonical and an astronomical allegory, woven into and drawn from the earliest Theogony as taught in the Mysteries.

It is in the religious doctrines of the Gnostics that we can best see the real meaning of the Dragon, the Serpent, the Goat, and all those symbols of Powers now called Evil ; for it is they who, in their teachings, divulged the Esoteric nature of the Jewish substitute for Ain Suph, the true meaning of which the Rabbins concealed, while the Christians, with a few exceptions, knew nothing of it. Surely Jesus of Nazareth would have hardly advised his apostles to show themselves as *wise* as the serpent, had the latter been a symbol of the Evil One ; nor would the Ophites, the learned Egyptian Gnostics of the "Brotherhood of the Serpent," have reverenced a living snake in their ceremonies as the emblem of *Wisdom*, the divine Sophia, and a type of the All-good, not the All-bad, were that reptile so closely connected with Satan. The fact is, that even as a common ophidian it has ever been a dual symbol, and as a dragon it has never been anything else than a symbol of the Manifested Deity in its great Wisdom. The *draco volans*, the "flying dragon" of the early painters, may be an exaggerated picture of the real extinct antediluvian animal and those who have faith in the Occult Teachings

believe that in the days of old there were such creatures as flying dragons, a kind of Pterodactyl, and that it is those gigantic winged lizards that served as prototypes for the Seraph of Moses and his great Brazen Serpent. [See *Numbers* xxi. 8. 9]; God orders Moses to build a brazen serpent (Sarah), to *look upon* which heals those bitten by the Fiery Serpents. The latter were the Seraphim, each one of which, as Isaiah shows, "had six wings"; they are the symbols of Jehovah, and of all the other Demiurgi who produce out of themselves six sons or likenesses—seven with their creator. Thus the Brazen Serpent *is* Jehovah, the chief of the "Fiery Serpents". And yet, in II *Kings* (xvii, 4) it is shown that king Hezekiah, who, like as David his father, "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord"—brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had had made.....and called it Nehushtan," or piece of brass]. The Jews formerly worshipped the latter *idol* themselves, but, after the religious reforms brought about by Hezekiah, they turned round, and called that symbol of the Great or Higher God of every other nation a Devil, and their own usurper—the "One God" ["And Satan stood up against Israel and provoked David to number Israel." (*I. Chronicles*, xxi. 1). "The anger of the Lord (Jehovah) was kindled against Israel, and he moved David.....to say, Go, number Isreal." (*II. Samuel*, xxiv. 1). The two are then identical.].....

There are three distinct classes or groups of the Elohim called Sephiroth in the *Kabalah*. Jehovah appears only in chapter IV of *Genesis*, in the first verse of which he is named Cain, and in the last transformed into mankind—male and female, Jah-veh. [In the above mentioned work (p. 233), verse 26 of chapter iv of *Genesis* is correctly translated, "then men began to call *themselves* Jehovah," but less correctly explained, perhaps, as the last word ought to be

written Jah (male), Hovah (female), to show that from that time the race of distinctly separate man and women began]. The Serpent, moreover, is not Satan, but the bright Angel, one of the Elohim clothed in radiance and glory, who— promising the women, if they ate of the forbidden fruit, “Ye shall not surely die”—kept his promise, and made man immortal in his *incorruplicable nature*. He is the Iao of the Mysteries, the chief of the Androgyne creators of men. Chapter iii contains (Esoterically) the withdrawal of the veil of ignorance that closed the perceptions of the Angelic Man, made in the image of the “boneless” Gods, and the opening of his consciousness to his real nature ; thus showing the Bright Angel (Lucifer), in the light of a giver of Immortality, and as the “Enlightener ;” while the real Fall into generation and matter is to be sought in chapter iv. There Jehovah-Cain, the male part of Adam the *dual man*, having separated himself from Eve, creates in her Abel, *the first natural woman*, and sheds the *virgin blood*. Now Cain, being shown identical with Jehovah, on the authority of the correct reading of the first verse of chapter iv of Genesis, in the original Hebrew text, and the Rabbins teaching that “Kin (Cain) the evil was the son of Eve by Samael, the Devil, who occupied the place of Adam,” (*Op. Cit.* p. 293) ; and the *Talmud* adding that “the evil spirit, Satan, and Samael, the angel of Death, are the same” (*Rabba Battra* 16 a)—it becomes easy to see that Jehovah (mankind, or Jah-hovah) and Satan (therefore the tempting serpent) are one and the same in every particular. *There is no Devil, no evil outside mankind to produce a Devil.* Evil is a necessity in, and one of the supporters of the Manifested Universe. It is a necessity for progress and evolution, as night is necessary for the production of day, and death for that of life—that *man may live for ever*.

Satan represents metaphysically simply the *reverse* or the *polar opposite* of everything in Nature. [In Demonology, Satan is the leader of the opposition in Hell, the monarch of which was Beelzebub. He belongs to the fifth kind or class of Demons (of which there are nine according to mediaeval Demonology), and he is at the head of witches and sorcerers. But see elsewhere the true meaning of Baphomet, the goat-headed Satan, one with Azael the scape-goat of Israel. Nature is the God Pan]. He is the "Adversary", allegorically, the "Murderer," and the great Enemy of *all*, because there is nothing in the whole Universe that has not two sides—the reverses of the same medal. But in that case, light, goodness, beauty, etc., may be called Satan with as much propriety as the Devil, since they are the Adversaries of darkness, badness and ugliness. And now the philosophy and the *rationale* of certain early Christian sects—called *heretical* and viewed as the abomination of the times—will become more comprehensible. We may understand how it was that the sect of Satanians came to be degraded and were anathematized without any hope of vindication in a future day, since they kept their tenets secret. How, on the same principle, the Cainites came to be degraded, and even the (Judas) Iscariotes ; the true character of the *treacherous* apostle having never been correctly presented before the tribunal of humanity.

As a direct consequence, the tenets of the Gnostic sects also become clear. Each of these sects was founded by an Initiate, while their tenets were based on the correct knowledge of the symbolism of every nation. Thus it becomes comprehensible why Ilda-baoth was regarded by most of them as the God of Moses, and was held to be a proud, ambitious, and impure spirit, who had abused his power by usurping the place of the Highest God,

though he was no better, and in some respects far worse than his brother Elohim ; the latter representing the all-embracing manifested Deity only in their collectivity, since they were the Fashioners of the first differentiations of the primary Cosmic Substance for the creation of the phenomenal Universe. Therefore Jehovah was called by the Gnostics the Creator of, and one with, Ophiomorphos, the Serpent, Satan, or Evil. (See *Isis Unveiled*, ii. 184). They taught that Iurbo and Adonai were names of Iao-Jehovah, who is an emanation of Ilda-baoth. (See *Codex Nazareus*, iii. 73). This, in their language, amounted to saying what the Rabbins expressed in a more veiled way, by stating that "Cain had been generated by Samael or Satan."

The fallen Angels, in every ancient system, are made the prototypes of *fallen* men—allegorically, and *those men themselves*—Esoterically. Thus the Elohim of the hour of creation became the Beni-Elohim, the sons of God, among whom is Satan, in the Semitic traditions. War in the Heaven between Thraetaona and Azhi-dahaka, the destroying Serpent, ends on Earth, according to Burnouf, in the battle of pious men against the power of Evil, "of the Iranians with the Aryan Brahmans of India." And the conflict of the Gods with the Asuras is repeated in the Great War—the Mahabharata. In the latest religion of all, Christianity, all the combatants, Gods and Demons, Adversaries in both the camps, are now transformed into Dragons and Satans, simply in order to connect evil personified with the serpent of *Genesis*, and thus prove the new dogma.—*Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II, pp. 395—408.

Page 266, Bali :—

In the Rig-Veda Vishnu is celebrated for his three strides by which he measures the whole universe. He is Urugaya or Urukrama, wide-Strider. In explaining the phrase "tredha nidadhe padam": '(Vishnu) placed his step

three fold or in three places' (R. V. I. 22,17), Yaska, who himself is an ancient authority whose period is about 500 B. C., quotes two older authorities, Sakapuni and Aurnavabha thus :—

Yad idam kincha tad Vikramate Vishnu, tredha nidadhe padam, "tredhabhavaya prithivyam antarikshe divi" iti Sakapunih, "Samarohane Vishnupade gayasirasi" iti Aurnavabhah.

"Vishnu strides over this, whatever exists. He plants his step in a three-fold manner,—*i. e.*, 'for a three-fold existence, on earth, in the atmosphere, and in the sky, according to Sakapuni; or 'on the hill where he rises, on the meridian and on the hill where he sets,' according to Aurnavabha"—Muir.

Thus, according to Aurnavabha, Vishnu is the sun-god, and his third step is placed at the point of sunset, called *Gayasiras*, 'the head or peak of Gaya,' taken by Durgacharya (quoted by Dr. Muir) to be 'the hill of setting.' The point of sunset is called *asta* which is a vedic word meaning house, and *gaya* is another vedic word meaning house. The west into which the sun disappears at the close of his daily walk seems to have been viewed as a part of his house, that house extending from there in unseen regions round to the point of sunrise. Be this as it may. Instead of all the three points of the sun's rising, meridian, and setting being called Vishnupadas, Aurnavabha calls only the meridian Vishnupada, Vishnu's station. By Vishnu's pada he probably means Vishnu's paramapada, *highest station*, spoken of in the same hymn (I, 22, 20 and 21). If we follow Sakapuni in taking Vishnu to be not merely the sun, but an all-prevading invisible deity with the three stations of (1) Earth, (2) Antariksha or the cloud region, and (3) Sky, fancied to be the three steps of his three wide strides, his *third step*

would be the far off dome of the sky on high, called Vishnu's *highest station* or *highest step* [in classical sanskrit, the whole sky *viyat* and not simply the meridian is called Vishnu-pada,] in order to distinguish it from his first and second stations of Earth and Antariksha.

These three stations are the regions presided over by the triad of the Vedic Deities. About this distribution of all the Vedic Deities over the three stations Prof. Max Muller says :—

" Apart from the philosophical doctrine that all the gods are only manifestations of the supreme self, the Atman, Yaska quotes the Nairuktas in support of a triad of gods, (1) those of the earth, (2) those of the air, and (3) those of the sky. Agni (fire), as Yaska says, has his place on earth, Vayu (wind) or Indra in the air, and Surya (sun) in the sky. This triad of deities is not Yaska's invention. It is clearly indicated in the Brahmanas." —(*Science of Mythology*, p. 475).

In support of this Prof. Max Muller's quotes the Aitareya-Brahmana and the Chandogya-Upanishad (IV, 7. 1,) and says :—

" Even in the hymns this threefold division of earth, air, and sky, or, as sometimes translated, earth, sky, and heaven, is well established. Thus we read in R.V. X, 65, 9, of terrestrial gods, *parthiva*, of celestial, *divya*, and of those who dwell in the waters (clouds) *ye apsu*."

This three-fold division is not to be taken too rigidly (*Ibid* p. 479): There are deities such as Agni and Indra (the Rainer), who, though located in the fire on earth and in the atmosphere where the heat of the sun generates rain, are identified in several parts of the Rig-Veda with the sun, nay, with the Creator of the universe including the sun, and are praised as each being all the gods.

Prof. Max Muller's conclusion is :

" All Vedic gods, nay, all Aryan gods, were in the

beginning physical. I say in the beginning, for there came, no doubt, a time when the concept of Deity being once formed and having became familiar, invisible and purely abstract object were also raised to a divine status.”—(*Ibid*, p. 817).

Whether *all* the Vedic deities were in the beginning physical *without any exception* is a question about which opinion seems to be divided among other European Vedic scholars. He himself defines these deities thus :—

“ It is true that the conception of all the ancient Aryan gods was suggested by what we call real objects, by the great phenomena of nature, by they were fashioned as divine personalities by the mind of man (*namarupa*). Even such names as Agni, Fire, Surya or Helios, Sun, Ushas or Eros, Dawn, though representing the activities of real, of palpable or visible things, were never meant simply for the material fire for the fiery globe, or for the rosy light of the morning, that appeared and vanished every day. As soon as they were used mythologically, they stood for ideas framed by men who not only saw and stared, but who thought and adored. Agni was not confined to the hearth, but wherever there was light or warmth, whether on earth or in heaven, there was Agni. He was therefrom the beginning, and he was in these many places, not, as is generally supposed, as the result of a philosophical syncretism, but in consequence of his unbroken manifestation under various forms ; nor was even Surya, the Sun confined to the sky. As Savitri he was supposed to pervade all living things, as Vishnu he stepped across the air, as Mitra he was the delight of the whole world.”—(*Ibid*, 117, 118).

Again :—

“ These Devas are not the sky, the sun, and the moon, they are the agents or the souls of these celestial bodies”—(*Ibid*, 209).

When the Rig Veda itself says that it is only one God that is variously (*bahudha*) called Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni Suparna, or Garutman, Yama, Matarisva, (I. 164, 46), we have in it the source of the philosophical doctrine that all the gods are only manifestations of the one supreme Self or Soul. If thus the gods seen in the universe by the Rishis of the Rig Veda are not the terrestrial and celestial bodies themselves, but the invisible souls of them, and if all these god-souls are the variously called One Soul of the universe, the same idea is a little amplified when the Antaryami—Brahmana (*Brih-ar-up.* III. 7. 3-23) says to the effect that He who—speaking with reference to the gods (*adhidaivatam*)—is within Earth, Water, Fire, Antariksha, Air, Sky or Heaven, Sun, all the Directions, Moon and Stars, Akasa (ether), Darkness, Light; that He who—speaking with reference to beings (*adhibhutam*)—is within all beings, within (their) breath, senses, mind, Vignana (Knowledge,) but atman, the individual soul, according to the Madhyandina patha upon which great stress is laid by the Visishtadwaita school), that He who is within all these, whom all these do not know, to whom all these are bodies (Sarira), who rules or controls within (them), He is, O. enquirer, thy immortal Self, the Antaryami or Ruler within."

Dividing the universe roughly into the three regions of Earth, Air and Sky, the god Vishnu, described as striding through all these three regions, can only be the invisible One Soul of the universe that has entered into all things, and according to native grammarians, Vishnu is a name derived from *vish*, to enter into or pervade (*Vyapane*). This god, as we have seen in many stories, is so positively identified with Yagna, the Deity of Sacrifice, in the *Taitt. Samhita* and the *Brahmanas* and in the subsequent literature of the epics and Puranas that it is most likely that

this widespread idea has come down from the time of the Rig-Veda itself that in the Rig-Veda also Vishnu means the Deity of Sacrifice. Dr. Haug has comprehended the Deity Yagna to be an invisible god, extending, when unrolled, from the Ahavaniya fire of the sacrificial ground on the earth to heaven, "forming thus a bridge or ladder, by means of which the sacrificer can communicate with the world of gods and spirits, and even ascend when alive to their abodes. The term for beginning the sacrificial operations is 'to spread the sacrifice'. The Deity Yagna is extended everywhere with his threads (Yo Yagno visvatah tantubhis tatah—R. V. X. 30 1.). The secret of sacrifice seems to be that, as the victim represents the sacrificer vicariously, the sacrificer, by performing the sacrifice, spreads the Deity Yagna everywhere, that is, realizes Him to be all-pervading on the wide Earth, in the Air, and in the wide sky, offers himself unto Him, and obtains a subtle spiritual state in which he too can, by means of sacrifice as his vehicle, travel everywhere in the three regions of the universe at will. According to Dr. McDonnell's dictionary, *vishnukrama* or Vishnu's steps mean the three steps to be taken by the sacrificer between the *vedi* altar and the Ahavaniya fire. This shows how the sacrificer, realizing the all-pervading Deity Yagna of three steps, imitates Him, indicating thereby that he too has secured for himself the power of striding through the three regions of the universe (on his quitting this world). As Vishnu is the all-pervading invisible Deity of sacrifice, it is as it should be if he is symbolized by all the sacrificial implements and, above all, by light wherever seen, by the sacrificial fire Agni here, by the fire of Lightning in the atmosphere, by all the luminaries in the sky, most markedly by the grandest of them, the sun. This is how Vishnu, seen as a little dwarf in the symbol of the sacrificial fire on

earth, is the giant striding from there through all the regions of the universe. In the Rig-Veda there is a marked similarity between Vishnu and Agni. Prof. Max Muller says :—

"As in many hymns of the Rig-Veda, Agni is the *alter ego* of Surya, the Sun, we can understand why he, like the Sun, should so often be represented in a threefold character. The three steps of the Sun, best known from the myth of Vishnu, are very prominent in the hymns addressed to Agni. But the site of the three steps, that is the sunrise in the East, the point of culmination, and the sunset in the West, there is in his case another threefold division, according as the solar light is looked upon as dwelling on earth, chiefly as the fire kept up on the hearth and worshipped as Agni on the altar, secondly in the firmament as the sun, sometimes as the lightning, and thirdly as descending into the sea and dwelling in the unseen abyss of the waters."—(*Ibid*, p. 661.)

The waters of the sea as the third step may be the point of sunset according to the first of the descriptions that are mentioned. But according to the second description which places the three steps one above another, the watery region of the third or highest step may be the blue sky itself, the back ground to the sun, moon and stars. According to the Nighantu, one of the names of [the sky is the plural word *apah*, waters.

In the Chandogya-Upanishad, the three regions of Earth, Antariksha and sky are mentioned not only in IV, 17. 1 but also in two other places, V, 4—6 and II, 24, 1—16. The former says that the three, namely (1) *that loka*, (world meaning the sky), (2) *Parjanya* (the region of rain clouds), and (3) Earth, are [the altars] of the all-pervading]. Agni himself, (1) with the sun as his fuel, solar rays as his smoke, daylight as his light, the moon as his live

coals and the stars as his sparks, in the sky, (2) with vayu (wind) as fuel, cloud as smoke, lightning as light, thunder-bolt as live coals, and thunderings as sparks, in the Air, and (3) with the year as fuel, etc., etc., in the region of the Earth. The latter is about performing a sacrifice with a knowledge of the meaning of offering (1) the Pratah-savana (morning libation) to the Vasus, (2) the Madhyandina-savana (noon-libation) to the Rudras, and (3) the third savana (evening libation) to the Adityas and the Visvedevas. The deities addressed in offering these three libations are respectively (1) Agni representing the Vasus in the region of Earth, (2) Vayu representing the Rudras in the Antariksha, and (3) the Adityas and the Visvedevas in the sky, and these deities are said to cast back the bolt and open the *lokadvara* or the door to heaven in each of the respective *lokas*, worlds, of Earth, Antariksha and Sky for the sacrificer, in order that he may go thither *when this life is over*. This shows that the sacrificer in his state of beatitude was believed to have *kamachara*, unfettered movement by mere will, in all the regions—the same movement which the knower rejoicing in the Infinite self that is everywhere is stated to have ("Tasya sarveshu lokeshu kamacharo bhavati"—Chanda Up. VII. 25, 2). In other words, he strides everywhere like Vishnu. In another place, the sun is said to be *lokadvara*, the door to heaven, to the knower whose soul, striding up from the body, goes thither by the medium of the solar rays as swiftly as mind.

The three classes of the deities, namely Vasus, Rudras, and Adityas are mentioned in the same order even in the Rig-Veda, I. 45, 1. In the rituals connected with the Pitrīs, the spirits of departed ancestors, who are grouped as the Fathers, Grand-Fathers, and Great-grand-fathers, they too are respectively called Vasus, Rudras and Adityas, and the Rig-Veda X. 15, 1 and 2, speaks of the fathers as

residing in the three regions of Earth, Madhyama (the midregion) and Para (the highest or the sky). This shows that having reached the gods, the Pitris travel freely in all the regions of the universe like the gods themselves.

As the sun Agni is one of the symbols of the Deity Yagna, and as the morning, noon and evening are the periods fixed respectively for the libations to the deities of the regions of Earth, Antariksha, and sky, the Deity of sacrifice, set in motion on the libation day by one rite after another, strides through the three regions and the libations connected with them, according as the sun strides in the sky determining their proper periods. Viewed in this manner, there is no real discrepancy between Sakapuni and Aurnavabha, the one showing one aspect or the three strides of Sacrifice Vishnu and the other another aspect which, from the very regions of the deities worshipped by the libations, implies the first aspect.

The Aitareya-Brahmana commences by saying that Agni is *avama*, the lowest, of the gods, and Vishnu *parama*, the highest; that between them stand all the other gods, and that by offering the Agni-Vishnu rice-cake in the Deekshaniya *ishti*, the priests offer it really to all the deities of that *ishti*, as Agni is all the deities and Vishnu is all the deities, these two, Agni and Vishnu, being the two ends of Yagna, sacrifice. Dr. Haug quotes parallel passages from the Srauta-sutras of Asvalayana and the Kaushitaki Brahmana, the one saying that Agni is *prathama*, the first, of the deities, and Vishnu *Uttama*, the highest, and the other that Agni is *Avarardhya*, 'one who has the lowest place,' and Vishnu *parardhya*, 'one who has the highest place.' To fix the meanings of *avama* and *parama* as the lowest and the highest, he refers to the three regions mentioned in the Rig-Veda I, 108 as :

'Avamasyam Prithivyam, Madhyamasyam, Paramasyam
uta'—verse 9.

'Paramasyam Prithivyam, Madhyamasyam, Avamasyam
uta'—verse 10.

The full sense of the two verses as translated by Mr. Griffith is :—

"Whether, O Indra, Agni, Ye be dwelling in lowest earth, in central or in highest.

Even from thence, Ye mighty lords, come hither and drink libations of the flowing Soma"—9.

"Whether, O Indra, Agni, Ye be dwelling in highest earth, in central or in lowest.

Even from thence, Ye mighty lords, come hither and drink libations of the flowing Soma"—10.

Verse 10 is simply a repetition of verse 9, with this difference that whereas the latter mentions the three regions from the bottom upwards, the former mentions them from the top downwards. These three regions appear to be the regions of earth, Antariksha, and Sky. The word Prithivi, although generally meaning the Earth, should be taken here in its etymological sense of 'wide' or 'extensive', qualifying every one of the three regions, for verse 10 calls the highest region also prithiva (paramasyam prithivayam). The lowest place occupied by Agni is not due to any inferiority on his part, but to his being Deity Yagna's fire symbol on Earth here, while the highest place, occupied by Vishnu is due to his being the sun-symbol in the sky above, it is distinctly said that each one of them is all the deities. Taking any one symbol of the invisible Deity Yagna, he is completely represented by it, and his invisible, infinite, omnipresent nature is clearly indicated by the two symbols, one here and the other in the sky on high, being taken to be the two limits of him,—the limits of the limitless Infinite in the metaphor of a giant extending from Earth to Heaven.

That the poets of the Rig-Veda conceived their Deity to be Infinite is indicated by Visvakarman, the All-maker, being described figuratively as Visvatas-chakshu, Visvato-mukha, Visvato-bahu, Visvatas.-pat *i. e.*, one who has his eyes mouths, arms, feet everywhere and who has produced Earth and sky (the whole universe)—X. 81. 3 ; and the division of the universe into the three regions of Earth, Antariksha, and sky as the *dhamans*, stations of Visvakarman are referred to in verse 5 of that hymn as ; Ya te dhamani paramani, ya avaima, ya madhyama, visvakarman ! uta'. As he is fully represented in one and all of the deities, any one of them is all the deities ; hence the general henotheistic nature of the Vedic deities. All the deities abide in Indra also (R. V. III. 54, 17). Among the gods there is none that is small : they all are great indeed (R. V. VIII. 30. 1.)

The name, Prajapati, is mentioned in the last verse of the Hiranyagarbha hymn X. 121, in verse 2 of IV. 53, a hymn addressed to Savitri where that god is called Prajapati, and in IX. 5, 9, where Soma Pavamana is called Prajapati. The identity of Prajapati and Savitri is clear from the fact that in the Taitt. br II. 3,9,1—3 Sita's patronymic is Savitri (daughter of Savitri), and when she goes to her father to complain against the moon, her father is called Prajapati (Sita Savitri.....saha Prajapatim pitaram upasasara. Savitri means genitor, father, creator in the sense of one who brings forth all, and therefore in the Rig-Veda this god is praised as the lord of creation (Prasava), having golden hands, arms, eyes, and armour, illumining the sky with his rays after the procession of the dawn, and going in dustless path between heaven and earth. This shows that he is described in the garb of Surya, the sun. I say in the garb, because Savitri is not merely the sun, he is the invisible creator conceived in the figure of the vivifying, animating, exciting sun, for the same descriptions which give

him a solar garb are interwoven with such expressions as these :—

Savitri moves in the *three* bright regions, he delights with the rays of the sun (V. 81, 4) ; he is Suryarasmi, clad in the rays of the sun, and rising in the East (X. 139, 1) ; when Savitri, the Asura, lightens up the regions, “Where now is Surya (the sun), where is one to tell us to what celestial sphere his ray hath wandered ?” (I. 35, 7) ; Savitri approaches the sun (I. 35, 9).

The *three* bright regions may be the regions of Earth, Antariksha and sky traversed by sacrifice Vishnu ; and therefore Savitri, as Sacrifice, has penetrated celestial region so high the limit of which no man can tell. Conceived as worshipped in the aspect of the sacrificial fire, he has extended himself from here high into the sky where he delights with the rays of the sun and clothes himself with them. When the all-pervading Deity of sacrifice is the spiritual sun shining in the mental vision of the devout poet, and has gone up higher than the sun, where is the sun ? In VI. 15, 16, Agni who is the carrier of the oblations to the gods, is asked to bear man's sacrifice or worship to Savitri who sacrifices rightly. Thus Savitri is called *Yajamana* sacrificer, and if, as I think, Savitri, Pitri, Prajapati, Visvakarman (the All-Maker) are names of the Creator, Savitri's sacrifice can only be Visvakarman's sacrifice celebrated in the Visvakarma hymns.

The following passages from the Rig-Veda mention the three steps of Vishnu and other particulars about him :—

1. The Gods preserve the worshippers from that place from where Vishnu shrode over the seven *dhamans* (regions) of Prithivi—I. 22, 16.

2. That place is the *Samana-sadas* (common hall)—V.

3. In three places he planted his steps, enveloping the whole universe in his dust, upholding all the fixed ordinances (*dharmani*), and over-seeing by his striding act the *Vratas* (moral and religious acts of all beings)—I, 22,17-19.

4. By his three strides he measured the *Parthiva* (extensive worlds), he supported the highest home or place ; he alone measured the wide-extended place ; he alone triply sustained heaven and earth and all the worlds—I, 154,1-4.

5. He traversed the extensive regions for the sake of granting his worshippers wide-stepping existence. The look of even two of his steps makes the mortal agitated with amazement, while his third step no one can comprehend. He is huge in body when striding, but a youth, a child, when attending to the call of the worshippers—*Ib.* 4-6.

6. Men know only the two regions the earth and the sky, but he knows the remotest world. No one knows the farthest limit of his greatness—VII. 99,1-2.

7. Vishnu and Indra have made a wide world for Yagna producing Surya, Ushas, and Agni—*Ib.* 5.

8. That man never repents who worships Vishnu with his whole heart—*Ib.* 100, 1.

9. Thrice the swift god has traversed the universe of hundreds of lights—*Ib.* 3.

10. He is even beyond the universe—*Ib.* 5.

As already observed, Prithivi is not only the wide earth, but any extensive region, the wide sky and so *Parthivani Rajamsi* may include all the three worlds of the Earth, Antariksha and Sky, as Yaska takes Rajamsi to mean the worlds. Are the seven *chamans* the said three regions plus the four quarters ? Like Vishnu, Agni also strides through the seven dhamans.—X. 122, 3. The place from which Vishnu strides may be the sacrificial ground, the common place for all the gods to assemble and receive their oblations. The Deity Yagna is fancied

to have kicked up such a quantity of dust in his wide striding feat that the *prithivi* (the wide universe) is enveloped in it, shining with it in all the hundreds of stars, the sun, the moon, lightning and fire. Being the producer of the sun, Vishnu is more than the sun, and his huge body seems to be the mentally pictured giant form of his, extending from the sacrificial ground here to the highest limit of firmament and even beyond it, while the infant form in which he is accessible to the sacrificers seems to be the sacred fire Agni. Although sacrifice Vishnu is always all-pervading, striding everywhere, yet, for the sake of every sacrificer realizing him by means of his sacrifice, he has to enter into that sacrifice, grow with it according as the rituals of it proceed, and then, at the full growth of it, stride as the giant everywhere, thereby securing for the sacrificer a wide stepping existence. In other words, the sacrificer, at the end of his life here, obtains a life in which he can stride and be everywhere like Vishnu himself. This seems to be the drift of I, 155, 4. That the sacrificer becomes the Deity himself or exactly like the Deity itself, whom he has worshipped, is an idea which seems to be repeated in the Samhita and Brahmana of the Yajur Veda.

In two places Vishnu is said to stride for the sake of Manu :—(1). May we, ourselves and our offspring, rejoice with wealth, under the protection afforded by Vishnu, who thrice traversed the extensive regions for the bound or oppresed Manu—VI, 49. 13. (2) The swift Vishnu strode over this Prithivi to bestow it for a home on Manu. The men who praise him are permanent ; he of exalted birth has made for them an extensive abode—VII, 100,4.

Whoever Manu is, whether Man in general or the supposed first man exalted to the position of the moon in the wide home of the sky, it is implied that he performed sacrifice in which only Sacrifice Vishnu can stride for him, re-

lease him from the bonds of the mortal state, and bestow on him the permanent state of beatitude with an extensive unbounded world as his home. What was given to the first man and sacrificer Manu, is vouchsafed to all men who worship Vishnu *i. e.*, who performs sacrifice.

Vishnu strode for his friend Indra and assisted him in his battles :—“And Indra’s mother sought to draw back the mighty Indra saying, ‘My son ! These god forsake thee’. Then Indra being about to slay Vritra, said ‘Friend Vishnu,’do thou stride vastly”—*R. V. IV. 18, 11 ; VIII. 82, 12.*

Prof. Max Muller (*Vedanta philosophy*, p. 145) says about the goddess Vach or vidya :—Thus we find in the Rig-Veda (X. 125) the following hymn placed in the mouth of Vach or speech :—“Vach moves with the Vasus, Rudras, Adityas and Visve Devas (in all the three regions); supports Mitra and Varuna, the two Aswins, Indra, Agni, Soma, Twashta, Pooshan, Bhaga; rewards the zealous sacrificer, herself being the first of those deities who deserves sacrifice, the most thoughtful queen; through her alone all breathe, see, hear and eat their food; it is in her power to make one a sage, a Rishi, a brahmana; she causes war to put down unrighteousness, for she bends the bow of Rudra for his killing the hater of Brahman; the gods have made her manifold; she stands in many places, has entered into many things, penetrated into heaven and earth; she has brought forth the Father on the summit of the universe; her home is within the waters, in the ocean, from where she extends over all beings and things, and she concludes the hymn thus :—“I breathe like the wind, holding to all things; beyond the sky, beyond this earth; such a one am I by my power.”

Now this is unintelligible unless we admit a long previous growth of thought during which Speech had become

not only one of many deities, but a kind of power even beyond the gods, a kind of Logos, or primæval wisdom."

Thus she is a goddess of knowledge, devotion, righteousness. She has pervaded everywhere like our Vishnu of three strides.

In R. V. I. 155,6 it is said of Vishnu that with four and ninety names he impels the steeds, like a rolling wheel. Sayana explains it thus :—" Vishnu is here identified with time, comprising 94 periods : the year, two solstices, five seasons, twelve months, twenty-four half-months, thirty days, eight watches and twelve zodiacal signs "

As there is no mention of the zodiacal signs in the Vedic Literature, it must be understood that with the four names, the four seasons, Vishnu makes the ninety steeds to rotate like a wheel, the ninety steeds being probably the ninety days of each season of three months, which, turned round four times, would make the year of 360 days. The rolling wheel is certainly indicative of Time. Taking this and the three stations together, sacrifice Vishnu is eternal and Infinite extending over endless Time and endless space.

About Vishnu Vamana, the Taitt. Samhita II. I, 3, 1, says : " The Devas and Asuras vied with each other in respect of the Lordship of the worlds. Vishnu saw a *Vamana* or dwarf (*pasu*) victim, which he offered to himself as the deity fit to receive that offering. By this act, he conquered all the worlds. He who vies to become the Lord of these worlds shall offer a dwarf (*pasu*) to Vishnu ; he will become Vishnu himself and conquer all these worlds." The Satap. Br. I. 2, 5, 1, says: The Devas and Asuras, who were both sprung from Prajapati, strove together. The Devas were, as it were, worsted and the Asuras began to parcel out this earth among themselves, measuring her with ox-hides from West to East. The Devas went there,

placing at their head Vishnu, the sacrifice, who was Vamana (dwarf,) and asked the Asuras to give them also a share in the Earth. The Asuras, grudging as it were, answered 'We give you as much as this Vishnu can lie upon'. The Devas accepted the offer and said among themselves, that what was co-extensive with Sacrifice Vishnu was very much indeed. Then they placed Vishnu to the East and surrounded him with Gayatri, Trishtubh, and Jagati metres on the South, West and North respectively, placing Agni on the East, and thus they went on worshipping and toiling. "By this means they acquired the whole of this earth ; and since by this means they acquired it all, therefore, the place of sacrifice is called Vedi, (from the root *Vid* to acquire). Hence men say, 'As great as the altar, so great is the Earth ; for by the altar they acquired the whole of this earth.'.....Surrounded on all sides, Vishnu did not advance, but hid himself among the roots of plants. The Devas searched for him and digging the earth, found him at a depth of three fingers.

Just as the Infinite supreme Self located in the heart is termed in the Upanishads Angushthamatra (of thumb-size) which is the size of the heart, the invisible Infinite Deity, Sacrifice Vishnu, who, we saw, is the Giant extending from the altar to beyond the highest heaven and pervading everywhere, is termed the Dwarf, of the size of only the altar on which he is located. The Asuras are deluded by taking Vishnu to be only as much as the Dwarf in *form*, just as the Asura Virochana in the Chandogya Upanishad is deluded by taking his own *form* that is seen in the reflection to be his Self. But the Devas, having got as much as Vishnu can lie upon, get the whole universe as Vishnu is Infinite. This clearly implies that Vishnu, the sacrifice performed by the Devas on the altar, strode and extended himself everywhere.

There are three versions from the Ramayana about the Dwarf incarnation, one from Schlegel's edition, the other from the Bombay edition and the third from Gorresio's edition. The Madras edition, printed in Telugu characters, seems to correspond for the most part with the Bombay edition so far as this story goes.....Schlegel's edition describes the Dwarf as a Bhikshu mendicant with the lock of hair on his head and with umbrella and *Kamandalu* (drinking gourd). These are the emblems of the state of Brahmacharya. In the *Harivamsa* 239-263, the story runs as follows :—The Daityas seeing that Hiranyakasipu was killed by Vishnu and with a view to conquer the Devas, installed Bali as the king of the Daityas. Bali was always devoted to dharma, truthful, one who had subdued the senses, well up in all knowledge, seer of the essence of knowledge, grateful, most valorous, *Hiranyakasipu* (having a golden seat), and indestructible. Brahma too was pleased with him and performed the installation ceremony. Then, the Daityas waged war against the Devas to recover from them the empire of the three worlds lost on the death of Hiranayakasipu. Bali himself, praised by his grandfather Prahlada as being all the gods in himself, the unconquerable lord of all, the great Yogeeswara possessing all the Satvika gunas (spiritual perfections), took the field and fought with Indra and worsted him. As the last resort, Indra took up his Vajra weapon, but a voice in the sky told him that Bali, by the merit of his austerity, righteousness, truth and of the boon conferred upon him by Brahma, was unconquerable in battle by any body. Indra and the Devas retired from the battle field, and the Daityas proclaimed their victory. The whole world was established in peace and in the path of righteousness ; there was a complete absence of sin ; the bull of Dharma walked on its four legs ; Bali was installed

the king of heaven and the goddess Lakshmi herself entered into him, pleased with his valour and righteousness. Modesty, fame, splendour, brilliancy, fortitude, forgiveness, equity, kindness, wisdom, good memory, knowledge, peace and the other virtues attended him, the Brahmavadin.

Defeated by Bali, Indra goes to the home of his mother Aditi in the East. She takes him and the Devas to her husband Kasyapa, who leads them to the Brahmaloka. Brahma says to Kasyapa,

"I know why you have come here. Go to the other shore of the milky ocean, where, at a place called Paramam Amritam, Vishnu is performing a great tapas with yogic contemplation, he who is the whole universe, the support of it, the Self of all ; perform a great tapas there ; and as soon as he rises from his tapas, salute him and pray that he be born as your son". Accordingly he is born as their son Vamana, after remaining in Aditi's womb for a thousand years.

When Bali is performing a horse-sacrifice, Brihaspati, the priest of the Devas, conducts there the boy Vamana, as a Brahmacharin. He surpasses Bali's priests in the knowledge of the details of the sacrifice and teaches them its proper procedure. Surprised at this, Bali salutes him and asks him to tell what he should do for him.....Said Vishnu "As you gave the water of gift to me, you will never die from the hands of the Devas. Reside in Sutala in all happiness and splendour. Respect Indra as he is my elder brother. If you infringe my order, the serpents (Nagas) will bind you in their coils. You shall have as your food such sacrifices as are performed by men without faith, devotion, charity etc."

When Vishnu had gone to heaven, having bound Bali in the coils of the serpents, Narada happens to go to Bali

and teaches him a hymn of twenty verses styled *Moksha-Vimsaka*, whereby Bali praise to Vishnu for Moksha, liberation from the coils. Pleased with this, Vishnu sends Garuda to him and the serpents disappear. Garuda says to him " Do not stir from here on pain of your head being shattered to pieces ".

Rig Veda, I. 154, 1, celebrating Vishnu's three strides are recited to cure defects in sacrifices (*Ait-Br.* III. 38).

Vishnu is the door-keeper of the Devas. According to Ait. Br. his being the door-keeper of Bali also shows that he stood on the same level as a Deva, and was treated as such.

Ramayana, Bharata and the other Puranas agree with the Rig Veda about the nature of the three strides and about Vishnu's striding for the sake of Indra, but we notice the following peculiarities :—(1) Their Vishnu is Aditya with Indra as his elder brother. (2) Bali is not known in the Rig Veda. (3) Though an Asura or Daitya, he is the most righteous giver and yet he is bound by the receiver of the gift.

In this part of India, Bali is honored on the night of the first day of the lunar month of Kartika in autumn. There is a puranic story to say that once in a year on that night Vishnu permits Bali in the Patala to visit this earth and receive homage from men.—*Indo Aryan Mythology*, Vol. II. *Vamana Trivikrama*.

Similarly, Vishnu becomes the Sun, the visible symbol of the impersonal Deity. Vishnu is described as " Striding through the seven regions of the Universe in *three steps*." But with the Hindus, this is an *exoteric* account, a surface tenet, and an allegory, while the Kabalists give it out as the esoteric and final meaning :—"To the fullness of the world in general with its chief content, man, the term Elohim—Jehovah applies. In extracts from Sohar, the Rev. Dr.

Cassel, a Kabalist, to prove that the Kabala sets forth the doctrine of the Trinity among other things, says Jehovah is Elohim (Alhim).....By *three* steps God, (Alhim) and Jehovah become the same, and though separated each and together they are of the same One."—(For a detailed and mathematical proof of the above, *vide*, Secret Doctrine Vol. II, pp. 41-45).

The secret commentaries of the ancient sages say :— The Circle is not the "One" but the "All". In the higher (Heaven), the impenetrable Rajah, (Adbhutam, see *Atharva Veda* X. 105), It (the Circle) becomes one, because (It is) the indivisible, and there can be no Tau in it.

In the second (of the three Rajamsi, or the three "Worlds") the One becomes Two (male and female), and Three (with the Son or Logos), and the Sacred Four (the Tetrakty, or Tetragrammaton).

In the third (the lower world or our Earth), the number becomes Four, and Three, and Two. Take the first two, and thou will obtain Seven, the sacred number of life ; blend (the latter) with the middle Rajah, and thou will have Nine, the sacred number of Being and Becoming. [In Hinduism, as understood by the Orientalists from the *Atharva Veda*, the three Rajamsi refer to the three "strides" of Vishnu ; his ascending higher step being taken in the highest world (*A. V. VII. 99.1*). It is the Divo Rajah, or the "sky" as they think it. But it is something besides this in Occultism. The sentence, *pareshu guhyeshu vrateshu* (*cf.* i. 155, 3 and ix. 75, 2 or again x. 114), in *Atharva Veda*, has yet to be explained].—*Ibid*, p. 658.

As already stated, Aditi—Vach is the female Logos, or Verbum, the word ; and Sephira in the *Kabalah* is the same. These feminine Logoi are all correlations, in their *noumenal* aspect, of light, and sound, and Ether, showing how well-informed were the Ancients both in

Physical Science, as now known to the moderns, and also as to the birth of that science in the Spiritual and Astral spheres.

Our old writers said that Vach is of four kinds. These are called Para, Pasyanti, Madhyama, Vaikhari. This statement you will find in the *Rig Veda* itself and in several of the *Upanishads*. Vaikhari Vach is what we utter.

It is sound, *speech*, that again which becomes comprehensive and objective to one of our physical senses and may be brought under the laws of perception. Hence Every kind of Vaikhari vach exists in its Madhyama..... Pasyanti and ultimately in its Para form..... The reason why this Pranava [The Pranava, Om, is a mystic term pronounced by the Yogis during meditation ; of the terms called, according to exoteric commentators, Vyahritis, or Aum, Bhuh, Bhuvah, Svah, (Om, Earth, Sky, Heaven), Pranava is, perhaps, the most sacred. They are pronounced with breath suppressed. See *Manu II.* 76-81 and Mitakshara commenting on the *Yagnavalkya-Smriti I*, 23. But the esoteric explanation goes a great deal further] is called—Vach is this, that these four principles of the great Kosmos correspond to these four forms of Vach..... The whole Kosmos in its objective form is Vaikhari Vach ; the Light of the Logos is the Madhyama form; and the Logos itself the Pasyanti form; while Parabrahman is the Para (beyond the Noumenon of all Noumena) aspect of that Vach.

Thus Vach, Shekinah, or the " Music of the Spheres " of Pythagoras, are one, if we take for our example instances in the three most (apparently) dissimilar religious philosophies in the world, the Hindu, the Greek and the Chaldean Hebrew. These personations and allegories may be viewed under *four* chief and *three* lesser aspects, or *seven* in all, as in Esotericism. The Para form is the ever subjective and latent Light and Sound, which exist eternally in the

bosom of the Incognizable; when transferred into the ideation of the Logos, or its latent Light, it is called Pasyanti, and when it becomes that light *expressed*, it is Madhyama.

Now the *Kabalah* gives the definition thus:

There are three kinds of light, and that (the fourth) which interpenetrates the others ; (1) the clear and the penetrating, the *objective* Light, (2) the *reflected* Light, and (3) the *abstract* Light.

The ten Sephiroth, the Three and the Seven, are called in the *Kabalah*, the Ten words D. B. R. I. M. (Dabarim), the Numbers and the Emanations of the Heavenly Light, which is both Adam Kadmon and Sephira, Prajapati-Vach, or Brahma. Light, Sound, Number, are the three factors of creation in the *Kabalah*. Parabrahman cannot be known except through the luminous Point, the Logos, which knows not Parabrahman but only Mulaprakriti. Similarly Adam-Kadmon knew only Shekinah, though he was the Vehicle of Ain Suph. And, as Adam Kadmon, he is, in the Esoteric interpretation, the total of the Number Ten, the Sephiroth, himself being a Trinity, or the three attributes of the Incognizable Deity in One. [It is this Trinity that is allegorized by the "Three steps of Vishnu," which mean Vishnu being considered as the Infinite in exotericism—that from Parabrahman issued Mulaprakriti, Purusha (the Logos) and Prakriti ; the four forms—with itself, the synthesis—of Vach. And in the *Kabalah*, Ain Suph Shekinah, Adam Kadmon and Sephira, the four, or the three emanations being distinct—yet one].—*Ibid.*, pp. 465, 466.

Kartikeya :—*Rig Veda* I, 18,6 has the following Gayatri verse about Sadasaspati :—

"I approach the wonderful Lord of the sacrificial hall, who is dear and desirable to Indra and who is the giver of wisdom or insight." The preceding verses are about Brahmanaspati. Haradatta takes Sadasaspati to be either

a deity of that name or Agni himself, the Lord of the sacrificial hall, who is dear or desirable to Indra because the Soma drink wished for by Indra is in Agni's gift. *Rig Veda* V, 22, 2 addresses Agni as Truth wonderful. Adbhuta is mentioned in the Agni Upakhyana of the *Aranyakaparva*, *Mahabharata* as one of the Agnis, the son of Agni Sahas, valour; and the commentator thereon quotes the Sruti, "Adbhuta, the son of Sahas." *R. V. I.*, 40, 2 calls Brahmanaspati the son of Sahas, valour. Max Muller in his *Contributions to the Science of Mythology*, pp. 825—829, has shown that Brahmanaspati, the Lord of words or prayers alias Brihaspati, is one of the aspects of Agni. The *Skanda Upakhyana* of the *Aranyakaparva* says that Skanda or Kumara was born with six heads as the son of Agni Adbhuta and became the General of the Devas. The above verse about Sadashaspati is one of the Vedic texts upon which the Itihasa stories about the birth of Skanda seem to be based. I take Agni Sadashaspati to have developed into the Son-God of these stories, the general for whose birth Indra ardently wished and who, with his six heads, is wonderful.

Indra is the most valorous God of the Rig Veda. Likewise, Agni is the killer of Rakshasas, beings representing falsehood and, sin (*R. V. X.* 87). In his aspect as Rudra, he is known even in the *Rig Veda* VII. 46 as a warrior having a firm bow, discharging swift and flying arrows and having sharp pointed weapons. The *Rudradhyaya* in the Taitt. Samhita IV. emphasises this aspect of him; he is called the God of bow and arrows and also the Senanya, the General.

Even Indra desires him, the son of valour, the wonderful. Hence he is the child Antaryamin whose symbol is Agni, and who is the fire of knowledge, the General who puts to flight the Danavas, the dark passions. He is the son of Rudra and also of Agni, because Rudra is one of the

aspects of Agni. When born as the son of Prajapati, he has eight names ; and his ninth aspect, which is all-pervading and which has entered into all forms, itself without any form, is Kumara, the child Antaryamin. He is identical with Hiranyagarbha and with his father Prajapati. In the Vedic stories Rudra is the Son-God ; the Itihasa stories represent Rudra alias Agni as the father begetting Skanda as his son; the father himself is born or manifested as the son.

Satapatha Brahmana X. ii, 2, 1, identifies Agni with Prajapati. The Svetasvatara Upanishad (IV. 2) says that Rudra is Hiranyagarbha ; while III, 4 says that Rudra begat Hiranyagarbha in the beginning. The Skanda Upakhyana indicates clearly that Skanda is Hiranyagarbha.

Agni is rightly described as the lover of the six Krittikas, because, according to the Vedic calendar, he is the Devata of that asterism; the *Rig. Veda* calls him the lover of maidens, the husband of matrons and the lover of dawns.

The Vedic stories represent the son-god as being the offspring of many fathers and one mother, while the Itihasas take him to be the offspring of several mothers and one father.

In the Bharata story Devasena, the army of the Devas, and Daityasena, the army the Demons, are respectively Vidya and Avidya. They are sisters, as it were, as they spring from the same source. Kesin signifies sin, the dark Asura. Naturally he marries Avidya and wants to force Vidya too, but Indra rescues her by his valour as he is Sachipathi, the husband of strength. Lady Devasena is his own army, and as the object of the story is to show that a Senapati or general of prodigious valour was desired by him, the Lady asks him to find her a fit husband.

The wives of the Rishis are the senses and their husbands the worldly objects, holding the senses under the sway of their spell and utilising them in selfish acts or

Yagnas. There is stationed in the altar of the heart, Agni Kama, the Lover and Parapurusha, really the great In-Dweller, but outwardly *the other man*—other than their husbands. He wishes the senses to love him—to give up indulging in phenomenal perishable objects and to sense the Immortal self concealed in all phenomena ; but so long as they are mastered by their worldly husbands, he gets no chance of winning them and goes away to the wilderness. Where selfishness dwells the self of unselfishness cannot dwell. *Vana* is taken here to mean water. So Agni hides in water, in the deep depth of the heart, unfathomable to selfish man. In *R. V. X. 51* Agni runs away and conceals himself in woods or waters, and the Devas find him as a child concealed in the cave of phenomena. He queries them as to what is Agni's firewood which leads one Godward and which of the gods beheld his forms in many places. It was Yama that beheld him effulgent in his tenfold secret dwelling. Yama is God of Conscience, the controlling mind. He is able to find Agni, who, as the self, has gone into every object and is Visvarupa, the one manifold. When everything is darkness and gloom in mind, piety or righteousness prepares the worship and asks him to come out from his hiding place ; Agni's godward leading firewood can only be righteousness, which is the only fuel which can make the great Fire, the Self-shine for us and lead us godward.

The useless nature of the selfish yagna was found out and mind awakened. So, Swaha being Medha or Vach or Brahmanavidya, loves Agni, enters into the senses, and directs them godward. She herself, as Vach, is identical Vach Arundhati and so it was not necessary to take up her form. From the very moment the wives are thus made Spiritually to meet Agni, their husbands must be understood as having merged in Him, the object of objects,

the self of all. The six seasons of the year, as sacrifice Prajapati, are changed into six Rishi wives. In the vedic story the Seasons figure as males in generating their conjoint son, the Son-god. But, here the word, in another sense, denotes the conception period in every month for woman ; as there can be no conception without it, they are changed into six Rishi wives representing the senses, in order that they may conceive the spiritual Retas of Agni and bring forth the Son-god, the son of Sacrifice, for, his father Agni represents Sacrifice. If the sacrificer piously goes through the yearly sacrifice, the sun of the completed year rises to him as Aditya, the son of altar Aditi, with six heads and twelve hands, with which always to remind him of the religious acts he has to perform year after year, in its twelve months and six seasons. The Sun is not simply the phenomenal sun but the Self in the Sun—that self who, as the One Self of the universe, shines in the *Akasa* of the heart, as Kumara's another name Guha, shows. Svaha's taking up the form of the bird Vinata may indicate that she, as Vach, is the Gayatri verse. She is said to have flown up and brought ambrosia from heaven; in the vedic stories about the birth the birth of the Son-god who is distinctly called Gayatra, he is indicated to be the Bhargas of our Savitri Father—the same Bhargas which the Gayatri puts before the twice-born for their contemplation. So, Svaha as the bird Gayatri, utilises the purified senses, flies up to Agni and brings forth the Son-God Kumara. The Sveta or white mountain where he is born, stands for the height of purity or Satwa. His weapons are the perfections with which to destroy the evil or imperfections. The General of the Gods is fittingly born in a bed of *Saras*, arrow-seeds, like the morning sun born in a bed of his own shooting rays. The Retas or seed thrown out by Rudra is spiritual, that which is spoken of as the Retas of Mind in

Rig Veda X. 129. 4. One of Agni's names is Hiranyaretas, the golden-coloured flame of fire being its *retas* going upward, heavenward. *Retas* also means sun (R. V. I. 68, 4). Similarly Garbha also means the child. So Hiranyaretas and Hiranyagarbha would be synonymous ; and though Hiranyaretas originally meant Agni as one who has a golden flame or one who is a golden child (for Agni is the pet child in the Vedas), the name is capable of meaning one who has a golden child. So Agni Hiranyaretas becomes the father of Hiranygarbha. The golden pot in which the child is born is another indication of his being Hiranyagarbha, identical with the Vedic Son-God Agni, Rudra, alias Eesa, about whom the *Eesavasya Upanishad*, verse 15, says:—"The face of Satya is concealed in a golden pot. Pooshan ! uncover it for my seeing him who is Satyadharma." This description refers to the self in the sun according to the *Antaraditya Vidya*. The same universal Self is the self in the sun, as well as the self in the heart, the *Antaryamin* according to the *Dahara* or *Harda Vidya*, the glorious Son aspect of our Father the *Hiranyanidhi*, (golden treasure trove), concealed in the *kshetra* (field or body of man) and found only by *kshetragnyas* (knowers). One of the names of Kumara is *Guha*, which is also one of the names of Rudra, who is identical with Agni, and who is the Son-God in the Vedic stories. *Guha* means concealed. Agni supports heaven and earth, is Visvayu, the life of all and as gone into cave, he gives great wealth to those who know him dwelling in the cave, who approach him who is the stream of *rita* (truth or sacrifice) and who release or churn him out (R. V. I. 67, 3 and 4). The churning out of Agni who is concealed in the Arani or fire-stick seems to symbolise the churning of the mind for drawing forth the self concealed in the cave of the heart—that self who is the life of all and has gone into cave and cave, because as *Antaryamin* he is *Sarvantarah*.

If therefore appears that the name Guha must have meant Kumara to be Antaryami.

As the cock-crow awakens men from their nightly slumber, the cock seems to be a symbol for Prabodha (the awakened or enlightened state).

Krauncha stands for man's *samsaric* or embodied state with the head as the mountain. The Taitt. Sam. II. 5, 11, 1, divides voice into *asura*, *manusha* and *daiva* and calls the *asura* voice Krauncha. Again, it is the heron having a crooked neck. In the Ramayana, the male Krauncha is shot by a hunter who seems to be in disguise the Son-God Rudra, the Bowman of the Vedas and the bird killed seems to signify the seed of Samsara. Baka is a synonym for Krauncha and Krishna kills an asura of that name who disguised himself as a bird. Bheema tore to pieces a similar asura. The bird is typical of hypocrisy, roguery, and cunning. The Mundaka-Up. IV. 4 instructs us to use ourself as an arrow set in the bow of Pranava and shoot at Brahman the target, whereupon we become one with it. The knower practises this shooting every day in the *upasana* of Brahman, but his final shooting is when, at the time of death, the soul quits the body. The soul of a true yogi leaves the body through the top of his head (Taitt and Subala-Up.). On the top of the head of the infant there is a soft pit, the fontanelle, which remains open a considerable time after birth. The souls of sinners leave the body by other channels. The Son-God, as the Ideal of the knower, shoots his self as the arrow upwards, breaking through the head of the Samsara and thereby he makes a path for the birds, who are no other than the Sanyasins, the Hamsas and the Paramahamsas. Parasurama seems to be the prototype of Kumara, the son of Agni. He too shoots an arrow through the Krauncha mountain and makes the hole named Krauncha-randhra and Hamsa-dwara.

The Rishis very naturally divorce their wives ; when the senses love the Supreme Self, all the objects are merged in him, and no longer wish to hold the senses under their sway.

Visvamitra is the author of the famous Gayatri, which in the Upanayana ceremony, confers on the initiated boy the status of Brahmacharya. Kumara is the Nityabrahma-charin, the eternal celibate ; in some parts of India, women are prohibited from going into his temple. Visvamitra honors himself by performing all the samskaras to Kumara. His praise in honor of the God might very appropriately be the Gayatri itself. As Visvamitra, the friend of all, he is the fit companion to Guha, the Antaryamin, who loves all creatures as himself ; who is *sarva-bhuta-suhrit*, the hearty friend of all.

Indra and Kumara, the leaders of the *Devasena* (celestial hosts), are but the lower and the higher aspects of the same thing. And hence, Indra is defeated by Kumara.

In the Chandogya, Indra learns the knowledge of the self from Prajapati. Now, having tested the Son the Self and found him invincible, he makes him Senapati. As *pati* means lord or husband, his becoming Senapati of the Devas is his marrying Devasena. She is not a lady of flesh and blood and this wedding does not clash with Kumara's being the eternal celibate. The goddess Sree attends upon him because she is spiritual wisdom—"Rig, Saman and Yajus are the immortal Sree to the good" (Taitt. Br. I, 2, i 26).

When Kumara asked the six divorced ladies to be his mothers and assigned them places in heaven, Indra said "Abhijit, the youngest sister of Rohini, became jealous of her seniority among the asterisms and went away to the woods to perform tapas therefor. I felt bewildered at the loss of the star Abhijit from the sky, and went to Brahma to consult with him about the counting of time hereafter.

He fixed the star Dhanishtha to begin with. Formerly Rohini was the beginning of time and with *Abhijit* the number of stars was even." Immediately the Krittikas, the six divorced ladies, went up to the sky in the form of the asterism Pleiades, which shines seven-headed and which has Agni for its *Devata* or Regent. Seven-headed because Vinata too said that Skanda was her son ; he acknowledged her as one of his mothers and gave her a place among the Pleiades, always respected by her daughter-in-law Devasena. Now, the asterisms are popularly twenty-seven and Abhijit is not among them. In all the places in the Krishna-yajur-veda in which the asterisms are mentioned, they begin with the Krittikas. Abhijit is not among the twenty-seven asterisms. (Taitt. Sam. IV. 4, 10) ; Taitt. Br. I. 5, 1). Each of them has two qualities, one forming its front, and one the rear ; among them, the Uttarashadha has the quality of *Abhijayat*, conquering in front and of *Abhijitam*, conquered in the rear. But in the Anuvaka following it, Abhijit is separately mentioned as an asterism situated between Uttarashada and Srona. Abhijit has Brahman as her Devata. "Brahman desired, may I obtain Brahma loka. It offered a *charu* to itself as Abhijit Brahman and thereby conquered Brahmaloka". (Taitt. Br. III. 1, 1 and 2, 4 and 5). But the characteristic of Abhijiti is ascribed there to seven other asterisms, Mrigaseersha, Svati, Visakha, Anuradha, Jyeshta, the Poorva and the Uttara Ashada and Apa Bharani. By including Abhijit, the number of asterisms become *Sama* ; there would be no necessity to bisect Visakha. So the Brahmana divides the asterisms into two equal sets, putting the fourteen from Krittika to Visakha, both inclusive, in the first Anuvaka and the remaining fourteen from Anuradhas to Apa Bharani, both inclusive, in the second Anuvaka. Under this mode the point of the autumnal

equinox must necessarily have been not the middle of Visakha, but the first point of Anuradha, when the point of the vernal equinox was in the first point of the Krittikas.

In this olden time the point of winter solstice or the beginning of Uttarayana was, as stated by Varahamihira, the first point of Dhanishtha alias Sravishtha, the Regents of which are the eight Vasus who go at the van of the Devas. This might have meant the position of this asterism as the first of the Uttarayana of the Krittika period.

The red dress of Kumara when he is installed as general is the dress of the Brahmacharin after the Upanayana ceremony (Apastamba I. 1, 2, sutras 40 and 41).

Skanda is the eternal *Kumara* or virgin since the Chandogya Up. Prapathaka VII says :—“They say that Sanatkumara is Skanda.” Sanatkumara may mean the eternal Kumara, or the Rishi Kumara, born as the son of Sanat or Hiranyagarbha. The Bharata identifies Sanatkumara with Sanatsujata, the good child of Sanat.

In the story of the *Ait. Br.* Rudra shoots an arrow into Prajapati and the Retas of Prajapati, which is born immediately afterwards, does not flow until Agni Vaisvanara, in conjunction with the Maruts, causes it to flow ; and then the whole creation is evolved from it.

Uma and Ganga seem to be identical esoterically as Vidya. She is the golden dawn; she is, as the goddess Vach, the river Ganga, meaning she who ‘goes and goes.’ It, is therefore another fit name for Vach who is *Saraswati*, ‘she who flows on’. Vach or speech can only indicate the infinite Self, but can never contain him. Therefore the Tejas overflows the river.

Agni’s name is Hiranyaretas, and so wherever the Tejas flows, all becomes gold.—*Indo-Aryan Mythology, Vol. II. Kumara.*

Adam-Jehovah, Brahma and Mars are, in one sense identical; they are all symbols for primitive or initial *generative powers* for the purposes of human procreation. Adam is red, and so also are Brahma-Viraj and Mars, god and planet. Water is the “ blood of the Earth ; therefore all these names are with earth and water. It takes *earth* and *water* to create a *human soul*”, says Moses. Mars is identical with Karttikeya, god of war (in one sense)—which god is born of the sweat of Siva, (Siva-gharmaja) and the Earth. In the *Mahabharata* he is shown as born without the intervention of a woman. And he is also called Lohita, the Red, like Adam and the other “ First men.” Hence, the author of *The Source of Measures* is quite right in thinking that Mars (and all the other Gods of like attributes), being the *god of war* and of *bloodshed*, was but a secondary idea flowing out of the primary one of shedding of blood in conception for the first time. “ Hence Jehovah became later a fighting god, ‘ Lord of Hosts,’ and one who commands in war. He is the aggressive Zodh—or Cain, by permutation, who *slew his (female) brother*, whose “ *blood crieth from the ground*,” the *Earth* having opened *her mouth* to receive *the blood*—(*Genesis 3*)—*Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II. p. 47.

Meanwhile it is the Seven Rishis who mark the time and the duration of events in our septenary Life-cycle. They are as mysterious as their supposed wives, the Pleiades, of whom only one—she who hides—has proven virtuous. The Pleiades, or Krittikas, are the nurses of Karttikeya, the god of war (the Mars of the western Pagans), who is called the commander of the celestial armies, or rather of the Siddhas—Siddha-sena (translated yogis in Heaven, and holy Sages on the Earth)—which would make Karttikeya identical with Michael, the Leader of the celestial Hosts “ and, like himself, a virgin Kumara (the more so since he

is the reputed slayer of Tripurasura and the Titan Taraka. Michael is the conqueror of the Dragon, and Indra and Karttikeya are often made identical). Verily he is the Guha, "the Mysterious one," as much so as are the Saptarshis and the Krittikas, the Seven Rishis and the Pleiades, for the interpretation of all these combined, reveal to the Adept the greatest mysteries of Occult Nature. One point is worth mention in this question of Cross and Circle, as it bears strongly upon the elements of Fire and Water, which play such an important part in the Circle and Cross symbolism. Like Mars, who is alleged by Ovid to have been born of his mother Juno alone, without the participation of a father, or like the Avatars (Krishna, for instance)—in the west as in the East—Karttikeya is born, but in a still more miraculous manner, begotten by neither father nor mother, but out of a seed of Rudra-Siva, which was cast into the fire (Agni) and then received by the water (Ganges). Thus he is born from Fire and Water—"a boy bright as the sun and beautiful as the Moon." Hence he is called Agnibhu (son of Agni) and Ganga-putra (son of Ganges). Add to this the fact that the Krittika, his nurses, as the *Matsya Purana* shows, are presided over by Agni, or, in the authentic words, "the Seven Rishis are on a line with the brilliant Agni, "and hence, "Krittika has Agneya as a synonym"—and the connection is easy to follow.

There has been, and there still exists, a seemingly endless controversy about the chronology of the Hindus. Here is, however, a point that could help to determine—approximately at least—the age when the symbolism of the Seven Rishis and their connection with the Pleiades began. When Karttikeya was delivered to the Krittika by the gods to be nursed, they were only six, whence Karttikeya is represented with six heads; but when the poetical fancy of the early Aryan symbolologists made of them the consorts of

the Seven Rishis, they were *seven*. Their names are given, and these are Amba, Dula, Nitatui, Abrayanti, Maghayanti, Varshayanti, and Chupunika. There are other sets of names which differ, however. Anyhow, the Seven Rishis were made to marry the seven Krittika before the disappearance of the seventh Pleiad. Otherwise, how could the Hindu astronomers speak of a star which no one can see without the help of the strongest telescopes? This is why, perhaps, in every such case, the majority of the events described in the Hindu allegories is fixed upon as "a very recent invention, certainly *within* the Christian era."

The oldest Sanskrit MSS. on Astronomy begin their series of Nakshatras, the twenty-seven lunar asterisms, with the sign of Krittika, and this can hardly make them earlier than 2780 B. C. This is according to the "Vedic Calendar," which is accepted even by the Orientalists, though they get out of the difficulty by saying that the said calendar does not *prove* that the Hindus knew anything of Astronomy at that date, and assure their readers that, calendars notwithstanding, the Indian Pandits may have acquired their knowledge of the lunar mansions headed by Krittika from the Phoenicians, etc. However that may be, the Pleiades are the central group of the system of sidereal symbology. They are situated in the neck of the constellation Taurus, regarded by Madler and others, in Astronomy, as the *central group* of the system of the Milky Way, and in the *Kabalah* and Eastern Esotericism, as the *sidereal septenate* born from the first manifested side of the Upper Triangle, the Concealed Triangle. This manifested side is Taurus, the symbol of One, or of the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, Aleph, "bull" or "ox" whose synthesis is Sen, or Yod, the perfect letter and number. The Pleiades (Alcyone, especially), are thus considered, even in Astronomy, as the central point around

which our universe of fixed stars revolves, the focus from which, and into which, the Divine Breath, Motion, works incessantly during the Manvantara. Hence, in the sidereal symbols of the occult Philosophy, it is this Circle with the starry Cross on its face which plays the most prominent part.—*The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II. pp. 579—582.

Again, number seven is closely connected with the occult significance of the Pleiades, those seven daughters of Atlas, “the six present, the seventh *hidden*.” In India they are connected with their nursling, the war God, Karttikeya. It was the Pleiades (in Sanskrit, Krittikas) who gave this name to the God, Karttikeya being the planet Mars, *astronomically*. As a God he is the son of Rudra, born without the intervention of a woman. He is a Kumara, a “virgin youth” again, generated in the fire from the Seed of Siva—the Holy Spirit—hence called Agnibhu. The late Dr. Kenealy believed that, in India, Karttikeya is the secret symbol of the cycle of the Naros, composed of 600, 666 and 777 years, according to whether, solar or lunar, divine or mortal years, are counted ; and that the six visible, or the seven actual sisters, the Pleiades, are needed for the completion of this most secret and mysterious of all the astronomical and religious symbols. Therefore, when intended to commemorate one particular event, Karttikeya was shown, of old, as a Kumara, an Ascetic, with *six* heads—one for each century of the Naros. When the symbolism was needed for another event, then, in conjunction with the seven sidereal sisters, Karttikeya is seen accompanied by Kaumari, or Sena, his female aspect. He is then riding on a peacock, the bird of wisdom and occult knowledge, and the Hindu Phoenix, whose Greek relation with the 600 years of the Naros is well known. A six-rayed star (double triangle), a Svastika, a six and occasionally seven-pointed crown, is on his brow ; the peacock’s tail represents the sidereal heavens ;

and the twelve signs of the Zodiac are *hidden on his body* ; for which he is also called Dvadasa-kara, the “twelve-handed,” and Dvadasaksha “twelve-eyed.” It is as Saktidhara, however, the “spearholder”, and the conqueror of Taraka, Taraka-jit, that he is shown to be most famous.—*Ibid.*, pp. 654, 655.

314. *Kapila*—The name occurs in Swetaswatara Up. 2 and is understood as follows :—

Sankara—The supreme Self is he who controls each and all the places and all the forms, and who, in the beginning, bore or maintained with knowledge Rishi Kapila, born from him ; he saw him being born. Kapila means one whose colour is gold-like, tawny. This Rishi is identical with Hiranyagarbha spoken of twice in the earlier part of the Upanishads and with Brahma mentioned further on in it; or it may be he about whom there is the Puranic text “Kapila is the first-born.” The following verses from a Purana are addressed to Indra :—Rishi Kapila was born in order to remove the ignorance of this world, as an amsa or incarnation of Bhagavan Vishnu, who, the Self of all creatures, incarnates in the Kritayuga as Kapila, to impart that knowledge which is salutary to all. Indra ! Thou art Chakra among all the Devas, Brahma among the knowers of Brahman, Vayu among those that are powerful, Kumaraka among the yogins, Vasishtha among Rishis, Vyasa among the knowers of the Vedas, Kapiladeva among the Sankhyas and Sankara among the Rudras.

Sankarananda—Kapila is that incarnation of Vasudeva who burnt down the sons of Sagara and not Kapila who was the author of the Sankhya system.

Kapila is the son aspect of God as sacrifice and is identical with the sacrificial fire Agni born by attrition. Brahma, Brahmanaspati, Agni, Rudra, Kumara and Hiranyagarbha are all identical. *Rig Veda* X. 27, 15, 16 are as

follows :—Seven heroes have come together from below, eight have come from above, nine have come from the west with winnowing baskets and ten have come crossing over the rocks and high ridges in the east. One of the ten, who is Kapila and common to them all, is urged by them to execute their first purpose. The mother is bearing on her lap soothingly the child of noble form who is not eager."

Sayana takes the seven, eight, nine and ten to mean the Saptarishis, Valakhilyas, Bhrigus and Angirasas or Maruts on all sides of Indra. Kapila is the famous Rishi.

According to *Vachaspatya*, Kapila is one of the names of Agni and it quotes this text as that of a Smriti :—The promulgator of the Sankhya system is Agni himself named Kapila. Vasudeva Kapila gave out the Seswara Sankhya and Agni Kapila taught the Nireeswara Sankhya.

Mahabharata, Aranyakaparva, Angirasopakhyana (ch. 223), narrating the genealogy of Agni, says ; " Rishi Kapila, who is Agni and also the promulgator of the Sankhya yoga". The commentator understands this to mean Nireeswara Sankhya.

Mahavamsa claims that Kapila was the Lord Gautama Buddha himself as Bodhi Satwa in a former birth of his. The town Kapilavastu was built on the site of his hermitage—*Indo-Aryan Mythology*, Part. II, *Ganga*.

Kapila is one of the seven Kumaras, the others being Sanatkumara, Sananda, Sanaka and Sanatana, Sana and Sanatsujata. The Sankhya Karika of Eeswara Krishna with the commentary of Gaudapadacharya, discusses the nature of the Kumaras, though it refrains from mentioning by name all the seven Kumaras, but calls them instead, the seven sons of Brahma, which they are, as they are created by Brahma in Rudra. The list of names it gives us is : Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana, Kapila, Ribhu and Pancha-sikha. But these again are all aliases—*Secret Doctrine*. Vol. I. p. 493.

The terrible sidereal force known to and named by the Atlanteans Mash-Mak, and by the Aryan Rishis in their Astra Vidya by a name that we do not like to give, is the Vril of Bulwer Lytton's *Coming Race*, and of the coming races of our mankind. The name Vril may be a fiction ; the Force itself is a fact, as little doubted in India as is the existence of the Rishis, since it is mentioned in all the secret books,

It is this vibratory Force, which, when aimed at an army from an Agni-ratha, fixed on a flying vessel, a balloon, according to the instructions found in Astra Vidya, would reduce to ashes 100,000 men and elephants, as easily as it would a dead rat. It is allegorized in the *Vishnu Purana*, in the *Ramayana* and other works, in the fable about the sage Kapila, whose "glance made a mountain of ashes of King Sagara's 60,000 sons", and which is explained in the esoteric works, and referred to as the Kapilaksha--Kapila's eye....*Ibid.* p. 614.

In the *Ramayana*, Garuda is called "the maternal uncle of Sagara's 60,000 sons"; and Amsumat, Sagara's grandson, "the nephew of the 60,000 uncles" who were reduced to ashes by the look of Kapila—the Purushottama or Infinite spirit, who caused the horse which Sagara was keeping for the Aswamedh sacrifice to disappear. Again, Garuda's son [in other *Puranas* Jatayu] is the son of Aruna, Garuda's brother, both the sons of Kasyapa. But all this is external allegory—Garuda being himself the Maha Kalpa or Great Cycle. Jatayu, the king of the feathered tribe, (when on the point of being slain by Ravana who carries off Sita), says, speaking of himself : "It is 60,000 years Oh King, that I am born" after which, turning his back on the sun—he dies.

Jatayu is, of course, the cycle of 60,000 years within the great cycle of Garuda ; hence he is represented as his son, or nephew, *ad libitum*, since the whole meaning rests

on his being placed in the line of Garuda's descendants. Then, again, there is Diti, the mother of the Maruts, whose descendants and progeny belonged to the posterity of Hiranyaksha, "whose number was 77 crores (or 770 millions) of men," according to the *Padma Purana*. All such narratives are pronounced "meaningless fictions" and absurdities. But Truth is the daughter of Time verily ; and time *will* show.

Meanwhile, what could be easier than an attempt, at least, to verify Pauranic chronology ? There are many Kapilas ; but the Kapila who slew King Sagara's progeny—60,000 men strong, was undeniably Kapila, the founder of the Sankhya philosophy, since it is so stated in the *Puranas*; although one of them flatly denies the imputation without explaining its esoteric meaning. It is the *Bhagavata Purana* which says that.

"The report is not true that the sons of the king were scorched by the wrath of the sage. For how can the quality of darkness, the product of anger, exist in a sage whose body was goodness and who purified the world—the earth's dust, as it were, attributed to heavens! How should mental perturbation distract that sage, identified with the Supreme Spirit, who has steered, here (on earth; that solid vessel of the Sankhya (philosophy), with the help of which he, who desires to obtain liberation, crosses the dreaded ocean of existence, that path to death ?"

The *Purana* is in duty bound to speak as it does. It has a dogma to formulate and a policy to carry out—that of great secrecy with regard to mystical *divine* truths divulged for countless ages only at Initiation. It is not in the *Puranas*, therefore that we have to look for an explanation of the mystery connected with various transcendental states of being. That the story is an allegory, is seen upon its very face : the 60,000 "sons," brutal, vicious, and impious, are

the personification of the *human passions* that a "mere glance of the sage"—the Self who represents the highest state of purity that can be reached on Earth—reduces to ashes. But it has also other significations, cyclic and chronological meanings, a method of marking the periods when certain sages flourished, found also in other *Puranas*.

Now it is well ascertained as any tradition can be, that it was at Hardwar, or Gangadvara, the "door or gate of the Ganges," at the foot of the Himalayas, that Kapila sat in meditation for a number of years. Not far from the Sewalik range, the pass of Hardwar is called to this day "Kapila's pass," and the place also is named "Kapila's den" by the ascetics. It is there that the Ganges, Ganga, emerging from its mountainous gorge, begins its course over the sultry plains of India. And it is clearly ascertained by geological surveys that the tradition which claims that the ocean washed the base of the Himalayas ages ago, is not entirely without foundation, for distinct traces of this still remain.

The Sankhya philosophy may have been *brought down* and taught by the first, and written out by the last Kapila.

Now Sagara is the name of the ocean, and especially of the Bay of Bengal, at the mouth of the Ganges, to this day in India. Have geologists ever calculated the number of millenniums it must have taken the sea to recede the distance it is now from Hardwar, which is at present 1,024 feet above its level? If they had, those Orientalists who show Kapila flourishing from the first to the ninth century A. D., might change their opinions, if only for one of two very good reasons. Firstly, the true number of years which have elapsed since Kapila's day is unmistakably in the *Puranas*, though the translators may fail to see it.; and secondly, the Kapila of the Satya, and

the Kapila of the Kali yugas, may be one and the same *individuality* without being the same *personality*.

Kapila, besides being the name of a personage, of the once living Sage and the author of the Sankhya Philosophy, is also the generic name of the Kumaras, the celestial Ascetics and Virgins ; therefore the very fact of the *Bhagavata Purana* calling *that* Kapila—whom it had showed just before as a portion of Vishnu—the author of the Sankhya Philosophy, ought to have warned the reader of a “blind” containing an esoteric meaning. Whether he was the son of Vitatha, as the *Harivamsa* shows him to be, or of any one else, the author of the Sankhya cannot be the same as the Sage of the Satya yuga—at the very beginning of the Manvantara, when Vishnu is shown in *the form of Kapila*, “imparting to all creatures true wisdom ;” for this relates to that primordial period when the “ Sons of God ” taught to the newly created men those arts and sciences, which have since been cultivated and preserved in the sanctuaries by the Initiates. There are several well-known Kapilas in the *Puranas*. First, the Primeval Sage ; then Kapila, one of the three “secret” Kumaras; and Kapila son of Kasyapa and Kadru—the “many-headed” serpent (See *Vayu Purana* which places him in the list of the forty renowned sons of Kasyapa)—besides Kapila the great Sage and Philosopher of the Kaliyuga. The latter, being an Intiate, a serpent of wisdom, a Naga, was purposely blended with the Kapilas of the former ages.: *Ib.* Vol. II, pp. 602—604.

P. 320. *Ganga* (seven streams):—The name is mentioned only once in *Rig Veda* X. 7·5. 5 along with Sarasvati, Yamuna and other rivers, while Sarasvati is mentioned in several places, in one of which (I. 3, 12) she is said to enlighten all our intellects. In the *Taitt. Sam.* she is identified with Vach, the Goddess of speech or intellect, In *R. V.* VI, 61, 12, Sarasvati is called Trisadastha, explained by Mr. Griffith as,

"sprung from threefold source: abiding in the three world, i. e. pervading heaven, earth and below, according to Sayanas like Ganga in later times."

Apte's English-Sanskrit Dictionary renders the Milky way as Akasa-Ganga or Swarganga, the heavenly Ganga ; and we saw in connexion with Vishnu's Simsumara form consisting of the whole star-bedecked firmament, that the Akasa-Ganga forms part of it. The Rudra star Ardra (called Betelgeux in European astronomy), which is the north-east corner star of Orion, is abutting the Milky Way. Crossing the ecliptic just to the east of Ardra, the southern side of the Milky Way passes over the Southern Cross, while the northern side passes not far from the north Pole star, and both the sides wind round and meet the ecliptic again near the Vishnu star Sravana.

According to Dr. McDonnel's Dictionary, Jahnû is the name of a cave in the Himalyas from which the river Ganga issues.

P. 329. *The Churning of the Ocean* :—

The tortoise is mentioned in the Vedas in two places, the *Satapatha Brahmana* V, 1, 5 and the *Taitt. Aranyaka* I, 23-25 ; and in both, the tortoise is clearly stated to be the Creator of the universe. The former says :—As to the Creator's being called Koorma, it is because, having assumed this form, Prajapati brought forth all creatures. What he brought forth, that he made (*Akarot*) and because he made, he is called *Koorma*. The Koorma is also called *Kasyapa* ; therefore they say all the creatures are children of *Kasyapa*, the creator Koorma. He who is Koorma is Aditya, the Sun.

Thus the Koorma Yagna Purusha is not simply the Sun. He is the creator, creating even the Sun.

The *Taitt. Ar.* says :—The Prajapati desiring to bring forth the universe, performed tapas. He shook his body. From his flesh sprang forth Aruna-ketus, (red rays) as the

Vatarasana Rishis ; from his nails the Vaikhanasas ; from his hair the Valakhilyas ; and his *rasa* (juice,) became a bhootam, a tortoise moving in the middle of the water. He addressed him thus. 'You have come into being from my skin and flesh' 'No' he replied 'I have been here even from before (Pcorvam eva asam)'. This is the reason of the Purushahood of Purusha. The tortoise sprang forth, becoming the Purusha of thousand heads, thousand eyes, thousand feet. The Prajapati told him " You have been from before and so you, the Before, make this". Arunaketu, taking water in his palms, six times placed it respectively in his front, to his right, behind, to the left, downward, and upward ; and from the water thus placed, coupled with his naming and calling upon them to come forth, there came forth, the Sun in the East, Agni in the South, Vayu in the West, Indra in the North, Pooshan below, and the Devamanushyas including the Fathers, Gandharvas and Apsarasas above. From the particles of water that went off when placing the worlds, there arose the Asuras, Rakshasas and Pisachas and they went off as the particles went off ; therefore they became routed (parabhavan).

The Vatarasanas are mentioned again in Taitt. Ar. II. 5 as being Sramanas and Urdhvamanandhins. They saw the mantras for offering certain oblations in fire for getting rid of sin. The epithet of Urdhvamanandhins seems to mean, those who churn upwards. The churning meant by this epithet was probably the churning of mind's flame towards heaven, towards that which is spiritually high, in contradistinction to that of animalism. About churning out the spiritual fire, the Lord of the Heart, the Swetasvatara Up. I. 14 says :—" Making his Atman the lower wood and Pranava the upper wood, man should see the Lord like the hidden fire, by churning again and again with the rope of contemplation ".

The Vatarasanas are mentioned in the *R. V. X. 136* as munis, along with a Being who appears to be their chief, called Kesin and Muni. The hymn says :—

1. Kesin supports Agni (fire), Kesin Visha (water), Kesin earth and sky. Kesin is all Svar (heaven) to look upon. Kesin is called this Light.

2. The Munis who are Vatarasanas wore *pisanga*, reddish or orange coloured, soiled (garments); [The original for soiled is *mala*, the very word by which the ascetic is designated in the expression 'Kim nu malam kim ajinam' in the Harischandra story of the Ait. Brahmana]. They follow the swift course of the wind when [they as, or like] the gods have entered [it as their vehicle].

3. Transported with our Munihood, we have passed through the winds. You, O mortals, behold even our bodies [that can pass through the winds].

4. The Muni, a friend appointed for the doing of ritual worship to every god [The original is : Munir devasya-devasya sanskrit yaya sakhahitah: "The Muni, a friend fitted to gain the beneficent aid of every god."—Muir ; "The Muni, made associate in the holy work of every god"—Griffith], flies through Antariksha, the region of the air, seeing all forms.

5. The steed of Vata (the wind), the friend of Vayu (the wind god), impelled by the gods, dwells in both the oceans, the eastern and the western.

6. Treading the path of Gandharvas, Apsarasas and sylvan beasts, Kesin, the knower of (our) wish, is a sweet and most delightful friend.

7. Vayu churned for him, and pounded things most hard to bend, when Kesin along with Rudra drank from the cup of visha (water).

"The allusion " Dr. Muir says " in the 7th verse of the hymn before us to Rudra drinking water (visha) may

possibly have given rise to the legend of his drinking poison (*visha*).” The legend of Rudra drinking poison is connected with the legend of the churning of the sea by the Devas for getting their amrita or nectar, and what is pertinent to our essay, it is the form of tortoise which Vishnu, among other forms, assumes in that legend that has come to be popularly looked upon as his Tortoise incarnation. Also, the words *Vatarasana* and *Urdhvamanthin* of the *Taitt. Ar.* appear to be the hidden pivot of which the gist of the riddle of the Puranic legend about the churning for nectar turns.

Thus Vishnu Purana, contradicting the Mahabharata about Siva's drinking the poison, says that the snakes took it. The Bhagavata Purana which follows the Vishnu-Purana in the main, differs from it in this respect and says, like the Mahabharata, that Siva drank the poison and became Nilakantha. But while the Mahabharata and the Ramayana say that Varuni went to the side of the Devas and was taken by them, the Bhagavata says that she was taken by the Asuras. (*Bh. VIII. 8, 29*). That Purana adds an incident not mentioned in the other works. It says that hearing that Vishnu had distributed the Soma, (nectar) to the Devas by assuming a beautiful female form, Siva came there and said that he was very anxious to see that lovely form ; that Vishnu appeared in that female form, but that as soon as Siva saw her, he was so much overpowered by love that he embraced her; and that his retas (mind's retas) overflowed and became gold and silver.

Kamadhenu or Surabhi is that wonderful cow from whom the gods could milk the fulfilment of any desires they might cherish. Similarly the tree Parijata, otherwise called Kalpavriksha, is the wonderful tree yielding to the gods all their wishes in the shape of fruits. The knowers ought to be *Satyakamas* and *Satya-sankalpas*, desiring only for that which

ought to be desired. When the Self of Universal love is obtained, every desire is satisfied; the Self is the wonderful Cow and the Tree.

The Sree which Indra loses by his disregard of asceticism—represented by Durvasas, seems to be the wealth of spirituality and not the worldly wealth. There is the Vedic saying that (the knowledge of) Rik, Saman and Yajus is the Immortal Sri, (wealth,) of the good ['Richah Samani Yajumshi sa hi srir amrita satam'] ; and so the goddess Sree that springs forth, may be taken to be Brahma-Vidya, who in the *Taitt.* *Up.* is called Bhargavi Varuni Vidya. In that Upanishad, the teacher is Bhrigu, son of Varuna and so the Vidya taught by him is called Bhargavi Varuni. Among other names our goddess Sree has the name of Bhargavi, and as Varuni can be taken in the sense of the daughter of Varuna the king of ocean, Sree is made to spring from the King of ocean—the ocean of the heart.—*Essays on Indo Aryan Mythology, Part II. The Tortoise.*

"The Radiant Essence curdles and spreads throughout the Depths of Space." From an astronomical point of view this is easy of explanation ; it is the Milky way, the world-stuff, or Primordial Matter in its first form. It is more difficult, however, to explain it in a few words, or even lines, from the standpoint of occult Science and Symbolism, as it is the most complicated of glyphs. Herein are enshrined more than a dozen symbols. To begin with, it contains the whole pantheon of mysterious objects, every one of them having some definite occult meaning, extracted from the Hindu allegorical "Churning of the ocean" by the Gods. Besides Amrita, the water of life or immortality, Surabhi, the cow "of plenty," called "the fountain of milk and curds," was extracted from this "sea of milk." Hence the universal adoration of the cow and bull, one the productive, the other the generative power in Nature : symbols

connected with both the solar and the cosmic deities. The specific properties, for occult purposes, of the "fourteen precious things", being explained only at the Fourth Initiation, cannot be given here; but the following may be remarked. In the *Satapatha Brahmana* it is stated that the churning of the ocean of milk took place in the Satya Yuga, the Age which immediately followed the "Deluge." As however, neither the *Rig Veda* nor *Manu*—both preceding Vaivasvata's "Deluge", that of the bulk of the Fourth Race,—mention this Deluge, it is evident that it is neither the Great Deluge, nor that which carried away Atlantis, nor even the Deluge of Noah, which is here meant. This "Churning" relates to a period before the Earth's formation, and is in direct connection with another universal legend, the various and contradictory versions of which culminated in the Christian dogma of the "War in Heaven," and the Fall of the Angels. The *Brahmanas*, repreached by the Orientalists with their versions on the same subjects often clashing with each other, are *pre-eminently occult works*, hence used purposely as blinds. They are allowed to survive for public use and property only because they were, and are absolutely unintelligible to the masses. Otherwise they would have disappeared from circulation as long ago as days of Akbar—*Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, pp. 96 and 97.

In the *Philosophical writings of Solomon Ben Yehudah Ibn Gebirol*, in treating of the structure of the universe, it is said :

R. Yehudah began, it is written : " Elohim said : let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters." Come, see. At the time that the Holy.....created the world, He created 7 heavens above, He created 7 earths below, 7 seas, 7 days, 7 rivers, 7 weeks, 7 years, 7 times and 7000 years that the world has been. The Holy is in the seventh of all.

This, besides showing a strange identity with the

Cosmogony of the *Puranas*, corroborates all our teachings with regard to number seven, as briefly given in *Esoteric Buddhism*.

The Hindus have an endless series of allegories to express this idea. In the Primordial Chaos, before it became developed into the Saptam Samudra or Seven Oceans—emblematical of the Seven Gunas, or conditioned qualities composed of Trigunas (Satwa, Rajas and Tamas)—lie latent both Amrita, or Immortality, and Visha or Poison, Death, Evil. This is to be found in the allegorical Churning of the Ocean by the Gods. Amrita is beyond any Guna, for it is *unconditioned, per se*; but when once fallen into phenomenal creation, it became mixed with evil, Chaos, with latent Theos in it, before Kosmos was evolved. Hence we find Vishnu, the personification of Eternal Law, periodically calling forth Kosmos into activity, or, in allegorical phraseology, churning out of the Primitive Ocean, or Boundless Chaos, the Amrita of Eternity, reserved only for the Gods and Devas; and in the task he has to employ Nagas and Asuras or Demons in exoteric Hinduism. The whole allegory is highly philosophical, and indeed we find it repeated in every ancient system of philosophy. Thus we find it in Plato, who, having fully embraced the ideas which Pythagoras had brought from India, compiled and published them in a form more intelligible than the original mysterious numerals of the Samian sage. Thus the Kosmos is the “Son” with Plato, having for his Father and Mother Divine Thought and Matter—*Ibid*, pp. 37, 372.

Lakshmi, who is the female aspect of Vishnu, and who is also called Padma, the Lotus, in the *Ramayana*, is likewise shown floating on a Lotus-flower, at the “Creation”, and during the “Churning of the ocean” of space, as also springing from the “Sea of Milk,” like Venus—Aphrodite from the Foam of the Ocean.

...“Then, seated on a lotus, Beauty’s bright Goddess, peerless Sree, arose.

Out of the waves ”.....

Sings an English Orientalist and poet, Sir Monier Williams.—*Ibid*, p. 407.

The allegory that makes Soma, the Moon, produced by the Churning of the Ocean of life (Space) by the Gods in another Manvantara, that is, in the pre-genetic day of our Planetary system, and the myth, which represents “the Rishis milking the Earth, whose calf was Soma, the Moon”, have a deep cosmographical meaning ; for it is neither *our* Earth which is milked, nor was the Moon which we know the calf. [The Earth flees for her life, in the allegory, before Prithu, who pursues her. She assumes the shape of a cow, and, trembling with terror, runs away and hides even in the regions of Brahma. Therefore, it is not our Earth. Again, in every *Purana*, the calf changes name. In one it is Manu Svayambhuva, in another Indra, in a third the Himavat (Himalayas) itself, while Meru was the milker. This is a deeper allegory than one may be inclined to think]. —*Ibid*, p. 428.

Rahu, mythologically, is a Daitya—a Giant, a Demi-god, the lower part of whose body ended in a Dragon’s or Serpent’s tail. During the Churning of the Ocean, when the Gods produced the Amrita, the water of Immortality, he stole some of it, and, drinking, became immortal. The Sun and Moon, who had detected him in his theft, denounced him to Vishnu, who placed him in the stellar spheres, the upper portion of his body representing the Dragon’s head and the lower (Ketu) the Dragon’s tail; the two being the ascending and descending nodes. Since then, Rahu wreaks his vengeance on the Sun and Moon by occasionally swallowing them. But, this fable has another mystic meaning, for Rahu, the Dragon’s head, played a prominent part in the

Mysteries of the sun's (Vikartana's) Initiation, when the candidate and the Dragon had a supreme fight.—*Ib. Vol. II.* p. 398.

P. 338 : *Apsarasas* :—

The Gandharva of the *Veda* is the deity who knows and reveals the secrets of heaven and divine truths to mortals. Cosmically, the Gandharvas are the aggregate Powers of the Solar Fire, and constitutes its Forces ; psychically, the Intelligence residing in the Sushumna, the Solar-Ray, the highest of the seven Rays ; mystically, the Occult Force in the Soma, the Moon, or Lunar plant, and the drink made of it ; physically, the phenomenal, and spiritually, the noumenal, causes of sound and the " Voice of Nature." Hence, they are called, the 6,333 heavenly singers, and musicians of Indra's loka, who personify, even in number, the various and manifold sounds in Nature, both above and below. In the later allegories they are said to have mystic power over women, and to be fond of them. The esoteric meaning is plain. They are one of the forms, if not the prototypes, of Enoch's Angels, the Sons of God, who saw that the daughters of men were fair (*Gen. vi.*), who married them, and taught the daughters of Earth the secrets of Heaven.—*Secret Doctrine, Vol. I.* p. 569.

Narada is the leader of the Gandharvas, the celestial singers and musicians ; esoterically, the reason for this is explained by the fact that the Gandharvas are " the instructors of men in the secret sciences." It is they, who, " loving the women of the Earth," disclosed to them the mysteries of creation ; or, as in the *Veda*, the " heavenly" Gandharva is a deity who knew and revealed the secrets of heaven and divine truths, in general. If we remember what is said of this class of Angels in *Enoch* and in the *Bible*, the allegory is plain; their leader Narada, while refusing to procreate, leads men to become Gods. Moreover, all of these, as

stated in the *Vedas*, are Chhandajas, "will-born," or incarnated in different Manvantaras, of *their own will*. They are shown in exoteric literature as existing age after age ; some being "cursed to be reborn," others incarnating as a duty. Finally, as the Sanakadikas, the seven Kumaras who went to visit Vishnu on the "White Island" (Sweta-dweepa), the Island inhabited by the Mahayogins—they are connected with Sakadweepa and the Lemurians and Atlanteans of the Third and Fourth Races.

In esoteric philosophy, the Rudras (Kumaras, Adityas, Gandharvas, Asuras, etc.) are the highest Dhyan Chohans or Devas as regards intellectuality. They are those who, owing to their having acquired by self-development the *five-fold* nature—hence the sacredness of the number *five*—became independent of the pure Arupa Devas. This is a mystery very difficult to realize and understand correctly. For we see that those who were "obedient to Law" are, equally with the "rebels", *doomed to be reborn in every age*. Narada, the Rishi, is cursed by Brahma to incessant peripateticism on Earth, to be constantly reborn. He is a rebel against Brahma, and yet has no worse fate than the Jayas—the twelve great Creative Gods produced by Brahma as his assistants in the functions of creation. For the latter, lost in meditation, only *forget to create* ; and for this, they were equally cursed by Brahma to be born in every Manvantara. And still they are termed—together with the rebels—Chhandajas, or those born of their own will in human form.

All this is very puzzling to one who is unable to read and understand the *Puranas* except in their dead-letter sense. [Yet, this sense, if once mastered, will turn out to be the secure casket which holds the keys to the secret wisdom. True, a casket so profusely ornamented that its fancy-work hides and conceals entirely any spring for]

opening it, and thus makes the unintentional believe it has not, and cannot have, any opening at all. Still the keys are there, deeply buried, yet ever present to him who searches for them]. Hence we find the Orientalists refusing to be puzzled, and cutting the Gordian knot of perplexity by declaring the whole scheme "figments.....of Brahminical fancy and love of exaggeration." But to the student of Occultism, the whole is pregnant with deep philosophical meaning. We willingly leave the rind to the western Sanskritist, but claim the essence of the fruit for ourselves. We do more : We concede that in one sense much in these so-called "fables" refers to astronomical allegories about constellations, asterisms, stars, and planets; yet, while the Gandharva of the Rig Veda may there be made to personify the fire of the sun, the Gandharva Devas are entities both of a physical and physic character, while the Apsarasas (with other Rudras) are both *qualities* and *quantities*. In short, if ever unravelled, the Theogony of the Vedic Gods will reveal fathomless mysteries of creation and Being—*Ibid*, Vol. II. pp. 918 and 919.

P. 341. *The Maruts* :—

The Rig Veda says (for instance see II, 93, 2) that, the 'Maruts are the sons of Rudra and that they were within Prisni's resplendent side'. They are described in the plural and are a troop. Sayana takes Prisni to be "the Earth, who in the form of a brindled cow, was impregnated by Rudra." Prof. Max Muller has shown that Prisni means a speckled deer.

The *Rig Veda* (I. 170, 2) says :—

Kim na Indra jighamsasi ?

*Bhrataro Marutas tava.

O Indra ! why dost thou wish to will us ?

(We) the Maruts are thy brothers.

Indra made them his companions, The *Bhagavata*

Purana says that they were made one with Indra (Samyam Prapita).

The name Diti seems to have arisen as a necessary contrast to the word Aditi, like the word Sura in contrast to Asura. Aditi seems to mean *akhandita*, not cut, not breakable. It is a name of quality which may be applied to the vast effulgence of the Dawn or to the vast earth. That Diti, in correlation to Aditi, means one who is cut, is illustrated in the story of Indra's penetrating her womb and cutting off her embryo. *Rig Veda* I. 164, 36 enigmatically says :—'The seven unripened germs (*sapta ardha-garbhah*) are the retas or seed of bhuvana, existence. They stand everywhere at the ordinance of Vishnu. They, the seers, wishing to be all round (*pari bhuvah*), with conceiving mind (*dhitibhir manasa*) pervade everywhere (*pari bhavanti visvatah*). Sayana takes the seven germs to be the solar rays. The original of 'unripened germs' is *ardha-garbhah*.—*Essays on Indo Aryan Mythology*, Vol. I. p. 188.

The mysterious number is once more prominent in the no less mysterious Maruts. The *Vayu Purana* shows, and the *Harivamsa* corroborates, concerning the Maruts—the oldest as the most incomprehensible of all the secondary or lower gods in the *Rig Veda*.

That they are *born in every Manvantara (Round)*, *seven times seven* (or forty-nine); that in each Manvantara, *four times seven* (or twenty-eight) obtain emancipation, but their places are *filled up by persons reborn in that character*.

What are the Maruts in their esoteric meaning, and who *those persons* "reborn in that character"? In the *Rik* and the other *Vedas*, the Maruts are represented as the storm Gods and the *friends and allies of Indra*; they are the "Sons of Heaven and of Earth." This led to an allegory that makes them the children of Siva, the great patron of the yogis.

The Mahayogi, the great *Ascetic*, in whom is centred the highest perfection of austere penance and abstract meditation, by which the most unlimited powers are attained, marvels and miracles are worked, the highest spiritual knowledge is acquired, and union with the great spirit of the universe is eventually gained.

In the *Rig Veda* the name Siva is unknown, but the corresponding God is called Rudra, a name used for Agni, the fire-God, the Maruts being called therein his sons. In the *Ramayana* and the *Puranas*, their mother, Diti—the sister, or complement, and a form of Aditi—anxious to obtain a son who would destroy Indra, is told by Kasyapa, the sage, that if, "with thoughts wholly pious and person entirely pure," she carries the babe in her womb "for a hundred years," she will have such a son. But Indra foils her in the design. With his thunderbolt he *divides the embryo in her womb into seven portions*, and then divides every such portion *into seven pieces again*, which become the swift-moving deities, the Maruts. These Deities are only another aspect, or a development, of the Kumaras, who are patronymically Rudras, like many others. [With regard to the origin of Rudra, it is stated in several *Puranas* that his (spiritual) progeny, *created in him by Brahma*, is not confined to either the *seven Kumaras* or the *eleven Rudras* etc., but "comprehends infinite numbers of beings *in person and equipments like their* (virgin) father. Alarmed at their fierceness, numbers, and *immortality*, Brahma desires his son Rudra to form creatures of a different and mortal nature." Rudra *refusing to create*, desists, etc., hence Rudra is the first *rebel*. (*Linga, Vayu, Matsya, and other Puranas*)].

Diti, being Aditi—unless the contrary is proven to us—Diti, we say, or Akasa in her highest form, is the Egyptian *seven-fold Heaven*. Every true Occultist will understand what this means. Diti, we repeat, is the sixth

principle of *metaphysical* Nature, the Buddhi of Akasa. Diti, the mother of the Maruts, is one of her terrestrial forms, made to represent, at one and the same time, the Divine soul in the ascetic, and the divine aspirations of mystic Humanity toward deliverance from the webs of Maya, and consequent final bliss.—*Secret Doctrine, Vol. II*, pp. 648 and 649.

P. 345. *Ahalya* :—Rig Veda X. 109 is a very enigmatic Sukta. Its purport, consulting Mr. Griffith's rendering, may be stated thus :—

The boundless water, Matarisvan, the fierce-glowing (fire), the strong, the bliss-bestower, the goddesses waters, first born with Rita, spoke together in respect of Brahma—kilbisha, the sin of Brahma—(1)

Without reluctance, King Soma first of all gave back Brahma-jaya (to Brahma); Mitra and Varuna followed (her); Agni, the Hotar, leading her by the hand.—(2).

They said [when doing so], 'This is Brahma-jaya; her adhi, miserable situation, is indeed worthy of being taken up in hand (*i.e.* of being sympathised with); she did not (even) stand for the help of a *duta*, messenger. Thus [by the merit of their taking her by the hand and restoring her to her husband] was the kingdom of the Kshatriya [meaning evidently King Soma] protected—(3).

The ancient gods, the seven Rishis who sat down to perform tapas, exclaimed in respect of her (thus):—'Terrible is the wife that is restored (upanita) to Brahma; in the highest heaven she bears unbearable [splendour]—(4).

The Brahmacharin goes engaged in duty: he is the one limb of the gods. Through him Brihaspati obtained his wife, as the gods the ladle brought by Soma—(5).

The gods, the men, the truthful kings, gave back Brahma-jaya [to Brahma]—(6).

Giving Brahma-jaya back, making [her] sinless with

(the aid of) the gods, " they shared the fulness of the earth, and won themselves extended sway"—(7).

It will be seen that the being to whom his wife is restored is called Brahma, Brahmana, and Brihaspati. Another name of Brihaspati is Vachaspati, the lord or husband of Vach, Word. Brihaspati's identity with the God Brahma *alias* Prajapati is indicated by the fact of the latter being the lord of Sarasvati *alias* Vach.

The planet Mercury is called Budha, the knower. The reason for this is to be found, I think, in the fact of Budha's proximity to the sun, leading to the impression that by his knowledge and devotion he took up that position in order always to pay worship to the great Guru, the sun Brihaspati. He is mostly in the lap of the sun's dawn light or evening twilight ; and therefore that red light, Rohini is his mother, as his matronymic Rauhineya signifies. As he sets heliacally sooner and oftener than the other planets, and as the heliacal setting represents, esoterically, self-sacrifice in, and the becoming one with, the sun, the emblem of God, the poetical fancy arose that he must be the son of the moon of self-sacrifice. Hence the following story :—

King Moon at the completion of his Rajasuya sacrifice carried off Tara, the wife of Brihaspati, the Guru of the Gods. As he refused to give her up, a terrible battle ensued in which Sukra (Venus), the Guru of the Asuras, sided with the moon, while Rudra and other gods sided with Brihaspati. At last the God Brahma took away Tara from the moon and restored her to Brihaspati. As she was then with child, Brihaspati said that he would not have another's embryo in her. She cast it out and it at once became the planet Mercury. All the gods admired the splendour of the child and asked Tara whose son he was. From shame she remained silent ; when, the boy, vexed at not being informed who his father was, prepared

to pronounce a curse upon her. But the God Brahma prevented him, and ascertaining from her aside that the boy was the moon's son, named him Budha and established him as the planet. (Vishnu-purana IV. 6 ; Bh. IX. 14 ; Hari-vamsa. 25 ; and the Kasikanda quoted in the Vachaspatya under the word Budha).

Another popular version, for which there must be the authority of some Purana, is that when the moon was a Brahmacharin, student under Guru Brihaspati, the latter had to go abroad for a few months, leaving the student at home; that the latter fell in love with Tara and that Budha was born to him. The child was adjudged to belong to Brihaspati as his Kshetraja son.

It is impossible to conceive that unless a Vedantic riddle was concealed in these stories, they would have been preserved among our sacred literature. Can any king who performed the solemn Rajasuya sacrifice, can any student learning Brahnavidya under his Guru, act in the manner the moon is stated to have done ? And further, think of the expelled embryo becoming the planet Budha. As already observed Brihaspati's wife is not a woman of flesh ; and therefore there is no adultery. She is Vach, Word, representing the spiritual lady Brahnavidya. The Dawn who removes the nightly darkness and introduces us to the sun, the self, represents Brahnavidya. The moon is on a career of self-sacrifice—we may call it his Rajasuya—in the dark fortnight, at the end of which he enters the dawn, as if loving that spiritual lady for the purpose of his spiritual birth ; and the light, soul, which he pours to the sun on the new moon day, is fancied to have shot forth as the planet Budha. The story, however, in saying that the lady was Tara, star, deals with the early dawn, *viz.*, the star Rohini. That Tara is identical with Rohini, is clear from Budha's matronymic Rauhineya.

The Santi contained in the Taitt. Up. for studying the Brahnavidya requires both the teachers and the disciple to say :—“ May (Brahma) protect us together and nourish us together ; let us do viryam, valour, together ; let us become brilliant and well read ; let us not take each other ! ” The Chand. Up. (I.1,10) says that what man does through Vidya, Sraddha, and Upanishad, that alone becomes most valorous. Brahnavidya is such a profound subject that even the teacher makes himself a co-student with his own disciple. As it requires one to regard all creatures as himself, there can be no completion of this knowledge if it is not always practised till death ; and so, even the Guru is a life long student. The discussion that goes on between the teacher and the student about the pros and cons of a subject before the conclusion is arrived at, is valour or warfare, but without mutual hatred. The student takes the teacher’s knowledge ; both love her; and the enlightened Self, Budha, that is born through her is the Self of both—is the Universal Self.

The Puranic stories above quoted make Brihaspati and Brahma to be distinct. But as we ascend to the Vedic literature, we will find them to be identical. While the story found in the Ait. Brahmana makes Prajapati (who is identical with the Puranic Brahma) love his own daughter Ushas, the dawn, whom the same story ultimately identifies with the star Rohini. The Taitt. Samhita (II, 3, 5.) makes her the dearest wife of the Moon. It relates that “ Prajapati had thirty-three daughters, whom he gave to King Soma. Soma, however, frequented the society of Rohini only. This aroused the jealousy of the rest, who returned to their father. Soma followed, and asked that they should go back to him ; to which, however, Prajapati would not agree till Soma had promised to associate with them all equally. He agreed but again behaved as before, when he was seized with consumption”—Muir. V. P. 264. This is how

Rajayakshma, the consumption of King Moon, is explained, As Rohini represents Brahmavidya, the moon is rightly devoted to her more than to others, and the consumption he gets is his attaining to the state of bodilessness—his performing self-sacrifice—as the result of his spiritual love of the spiritual lady. The moon's self-sacrifice is his Yakshma, worshipful quality.—*Indo-Aryan Mythology*. Vol. I. *Brahmajaya*.

The Subrahmanya formula, which praises Indra as Subrahmanya 'well worthy of praise', and in which he is called the Jara or lover of Ahalya, is contained in the Taitt. Aranyaka (I, 12, 3—4), and other Vedic works, and is as follows :—

Subrahmanyom ! Subrahmanyom ! Subrahmanyom !
 Indra ! agachha. Hariva ! agachha. Medhatithee !
 Mesha vrishana ! Asvasya mene !
 Gauravaskandin ! Ahalyayai jara !
 Kausika brahma Gautama bruvana !

Dr. Haug translates it thus :—

"Come Indra ! come, owner of the yellow horses ! ram of Medhatithi ! Mena of Vrishanasva ! thou, buffalo (gaura) who ascendest the female (avaskandin) ! Lover of Ahalya ! Son of Kusika ! Brahmana ! Son of Gotama ! (come) thou who art called !"

But the more orthodox rendering would run thus :—

"Indra, come ! Thou who hast yellow horses, come to the sacrifice of Medhatithi. Thou, who hast the scrota of a ram ! Thou who art the mare to the horse ! Thou who ascendest the cow ! Lover of Ahalya ! Thou who gavest out that thou art the Brahmana Gautama of the clan of the Kusikas !"

As regards the idea of Indra being the ascending buffalo, it appears to me that it is a variant of the old Vedic story found in the Ait. Brahmana, according to which

Prajapati becomes the Risya, stag and loves his own daughter who becomes a deer.

As bearing upon this idea and also upon the idea of the Subrahmanya formula, I may bring in here verse 2 of *Rig Veda* I. 121, which is a hymn praising Indra. The first half of it says, that He, the skilful worker, propped up heaven and poured forth the cow's wealth that nurtures and strengthens heroes ; and then the second half says :—

Anu svajam mahishah chakshata vram Menam asvasya parimataram goh.

This may be rendered as :—

The Buffalo ogled his own daughter (svaja), who is Horse's Mena and is mother of cow.

Horse's Mena means horse's mate *i.e.*, mare. The Buffalo is Indra. Thus, there is the riddle of a buffalo loving a mare and the mare becoming the mother of cow. I think the same being is in one place called Asva, Horse, and in another Vrishan-asva, probably meaning the powerful Horse. Thus, reading I, 51, 13 and I, 121, 2 together, we find two ideas, one that Indra loved Mena who is his own daughter, the other that he became Mena to the Horse.

Regarding the *first* idea, Prajapati's love of his own daughter is alluded to in two other parts of the *Rig Veda* (I, 164, 33, and X, 61, 7) and as I take the buffalo Indra who ogles his own daughter Mena to be identical with the stag Prajapati, it follows that Ahalya, in respect of whom Indra is mentioned as buffalo, is identical with Mena. Phenomenally, Ahalya is the star Rohini and the sun Indra loves her when in conjunction with that star. The same star Rohini is Brahmajaya, wife of Brahma *alias* Prajapati, and Brahma is called Brihaspati, and Brahmana. So, here in the Subrahmanya, Indra is addressed as the Brahmana poet. Brihaspati means the lord of wor is *i.e.* poet, and Indra is identical with Brihaspathi.

Kumarila, who is anterior to Sankharacharya, construes Ahalya as one who merges in Day and takes her to be Night (ahani liyamanataya Ahalya—ratrih). [It is worthwhile quoting Kumarila in full as he explains both Prajapati's love of his own daughter and Indra's love of Ahalya, together. He says “Prajapati the Lord of Creation is a name of the sun, and he is called so, because he protects all creatures. His daughter Ushas is the dawn. And when it is said that he was in love with her, this only means that at sun rise the sun runs (abhyeti) after the dawn, the dawn being at the same time called the daughter of the sun, because she rises when he approaches. In the same manner, if it is said that Indra was the seducer of Ahalya, this does not imply that god Indra committed such crime, but Indra means the sun and Ahalya (from ahan and li) the night and as the night is seduced and ruined by the sun of the morning, therefore Indra called the paramour of Ahalya.”]

Ahalya may perhaps be derived in another manner. Ahan, day, becomes sometimes ahar in compounds, for instance :—ahar-pati, the sun as the lord of day ; ahar-agama, the advent of day ; ahar-adi, dawn, the beginning of day; ahar-gana, a series of sacrificial days. And as l and r are interchangeable, we may perhaps take Ahalya to have meant Ahar-ya ‘she who goes to Day. Prof. Weber, in a paper, the purport of which is given in the *Indian Antiquary* for October 1888, Vol. XVIII, p. 302, considers the etymon of Ahalya in many ways and comes to the conclusion that she signifies ‘clearness’, ‘light,’ ‘Aurora’ and that Pauranic husband Gautama, ‘very rich in cows, may be either the sun or moon]. He takes Jara to mean the ruiner or destroyer—he who causes Jara or Kshaya. According to him the Jara of Ahalya means the morning sun that destroys the night. But Jara, lover, cannot mean

destroyer, but seems to mean one who *approaches* his lady love. [Kumarila derives Jara from the root Jri, to rub, waste the same root from which Jara, old age, is derived. That root is included in group No. 3 of Prof. Max Muller's list in his *Science of Thought*. The list has another Jri in group No. 119 b, meaning, to sing, from which is derived the Vedic Jaritri, singer. When the Rig Veda says that Agni is the lover of maidens (Jarah Kaninam I, 66, 4) and the lover of dawn (Ushasam Jarah, VII, 9, 1),—when it says :—Prabodhaya Jaritar Jaram Indram, (X. 42, 2) :—“ O singer ! wake up the lover Indra”, it would, I think, be rather inappropriate to say that Jara means destroyer. Probably the word is derived from Jar, to go, to approach, which is a root in group No. 118 of the list. The *Rig Veda* (X. 3, 3) says about Agni thus :—Svassaram jaro abhyeti :—The lover *approaches* the sister (the dawn)]. The etymon of Ahalya as she who merges in Day may be quite correct ; but she may not necessarily be the night, as the dawn who comes at the end of night is loved by the rising sun and may well be said to merge in day. In the case of the dawn's celestial form as the star Rohini, the meaning suits most beautifully, for at the time when the sun loves that star she is completely merged in daylight and is therefore Ahalya.

But what religious lesson is there in saying that the daily sun loves his own daughter, the dawn, and the yearly sun the star Rohini ? The reply is that these are metaphors denoting higher concepts. The sun, full of light, represents the formless Creator, whose svarupa, nature, is knowledge, and who is the all-knowing Mind, while the dawn represents Vach, speech, as she rouses men and most of the birds and animals from their deathlike slumber of the night, in which there is no thinking and no wording, to the awakened state of thought and word and deed. In the Rig Veda the dawn, is described sometimes as the mother cow suckling her

calf the sun, for first comes the dawn and then the sun as if she brought him forth ; sometimes as his sister ; sometimes as his wife ; and sometimes as his daughter, for what is the dawn but the light born from the sun ? All these relationships would apply to the yearly dawn Rohini. The daily dawn, by opening our view, brings forth as it were all that is seen and named, while Rohini in conjunction with the sun is, as it were, the mother of animal and vegetable kingdoms, which are resuscitated and brought forth and nourished in the bright half of the year. Similarly, to the Creator as Mind, His faculty of speech, Vach, is poetically daughter, sister, wife, or mother ; nay, He Himself is She in the aspect of flowing speech, and all creatures and objects of the universe are words uttered by Him in conjunction with her ; for the vedic mode of creation is by *naming*, and by *naming* out the universe He says ' I am all these ', in the sense that He is the Self of all and loves them all as Himself, He Himself is Father, Mother, and Son —Son because every creature is His son loved by Him as Himself. Vach represents Brahmanavidya in conjunction with whom the Creator has showered Himself as son, the Indweller, the spiritual wealth, in every creature. The paradoxical riddle of buffalo, mare, and cow seems to mean this :—The creator Indra is not buffalo but the *great* Mind ; Mena is not mare but Saranyu or Sarasvati, the Mind's *running* aspect as Vach, speech ; the cow is not cow but the *Word*, to be understood here as a collective name for all creatures who are all so many words or names worded out and enselfed by the all loving Creator, by realizing whose all-love man becomes righteous. Therefore, Indra is Subrahmanya, praiseworthy. His *ascent* as lover of daughter is a riddle derived from the name Prajapati and means His spiritual eminence or high-soaring flight.

According to Professor Weber, Indra is called " Svasur "

Jara," lover of sister, in another version of the Subrahmanya formula. In *R. V.* VI. 55, Pooshan, the solar god, is called the son of deliverance and spoken of thus :—‘We praise Pooshan, who is called svasur jara, sister's lover ; we praise matur didhishu, mother's suitor ; may sister's lover, who is the brother of Indra and our friend, hear us.’

Yama's reply to Yami shows that in the time of the Rigveda sister-marriage was prohibited, and therefore it is highly improbable that matri-gamana and duhitri-gamana were ever looked upon as anything but abominable sin. Our ancient poets were lovers of paradoxical riddles and one of the many ways of making riddles is to use words in their Yaugika sense as opposed to the Roodhi. To the Creator as Mind, Vach or Speech is Svasri, his *own flow*, as the current of words ; duhitri, ‘she who milks’, as milking or drawing concepts from him ; matri, ‘she who measures’, as measuring objects by naming them, for the name of an object is as it were the measure of some main quality peculiar to it ; jaya, ‘she who (conceiving concepts from him) gives birth’ to names of objects. The Creator loves Vach under all these her yaugika meanings ; but under the roodhi meanings he is not only wife's lover but paradoxically lover or suitor of sister, daughter and mother.

The meaning of this myth seems to be this. To the knower, the knowledgeable Sraddha or Faith in Brahman is the most beloved wife Vach Ahalya, yearning to unite in Day—in the spiritually brilliant Supreme Self. He contemplates Him as Self and is, at the time of the Upasana, quite oblivious of anything else and is therefore as if submerged in water and absent. The Deity contemplated upon as Self can only appear as Self. Thus appearing, He accepts and loves the knower's Faith and is addressed as :—‘O' Mesha, Vrishana !’—words both of which mean the showerer of the rain of immortality but which joined

together, give the paradox of Indra having become Mesha Vrishana.—*Ib. Ahalya.*

Thus in the Puranic legend, the son of the Moon (Soma) is Budha (Mercury), the intelligent and the wise, because he is the offspring of Soma, the Regent of the visible Moon, not of Indu, the physical Moon. Thus Mercury is the elder brother of the Earth, metaphorically—his step-brother, so to say, the offspring of spirit—while she (the earth) is the progeny of the Body. These allegories have a deeper and more scientific meaning—astronomically and geologically—than our modern physicists are willing to admit. The whole cycle of the first “War in Heaven,” the Taraka-maya, is as full of philosophical as of cosmogonical truths. One can trace therein the biographies of all the planets by the history of their Gods and Rulers. Usanas (Sukra or Venus), the bosom friend of Soma and the foe of Brihaspati (Jupiter), the “Instructor of the Gods,” whose wife Tara or Taraka, had been carried away by the Moon, Soma—“of whom he begat Budha”—took also an active part in this war against the “Gods” and forthwith was degraded into a Demon (Asura) Deity, and so he remains to this day. [Usanas-Sukra, or Venus, is our Lucifer, the Morning-star, of course. The ingenuity of this allegory in its manifold meanings is great indeed. Thus Brihaspati (the planet Jupiter) or Brahmanaspati, is, in the *Rig Veda*, a deity who is the symbol and the prototype of the *exoteric* or ritualistic worship. He is priest, sacrificer, suppliant, and the medium through which the prayers of mortals reach the Gods. He is the Purohita (Family Priest, or Court Chaplain) of the Hindu Olympus and the spiritual Guru of the Gods. Soma is the Mystery God and presides over the mystic and occult nature in man and the universe. Tara, the priest’s wife, who symbolizes the worshipper, prefers *esoteric* truths to their mere shell *exotericism* ;

hence she is shown as carried off by Soma. Now Soma is the sacred juice of that name, giving mystic visions and trance revelations, *the result of which union* is Budha (Wisdom), Mercury, Hermes, etc.; that Science in short which to this day is proclaimed by the Brihaspatis of Theology as devilish and Satanic. What wonder that by expanding the cycle of this allegory we find Christian Theology espousing the quarrel of the Hindu Gods, and regarding Usanas (Lucifer), who helped Soma against that ancient personification of ritualistic worship (Brahmanaspati) the Lord of the Brahmans, now become Jupiter-Jehovah as Satan, the "Enemy of God."]—*Secret Doctrine, Vol. II*, pp. 48 and 49.

This is only another version of the Hindu "War in Heaven," between Soma, the Moon, and the gods; Indra being the atmospheric Vul—which shows it plainly to be both a cosmogonical and an astronomical allegory, woven into and drawn from the earliest theogony as taught in the Mysteries—*Ibid*, p. 404.

In an old number of the *Revue Archeologique* (1845, p. 41), a French writer, M. Maury, remarks,

"This universal strife between good and bad spirits seems to be only the reproduction of *another more ancient and more terrible strife*, which, according to an ancient myth, took place before the creation of the universe, between the faithful and the rebellious regions."

Once more, it is a simple question of priority. Had John's *Revelation* been written during the vedic period, and were not one sure now of its being simply another version of the *Book of Enoch* and the Dragon legends of Pagan antiquity—the grandeur and the beauty of the imagery might have biassed the critic's opinion in favour of the Christian interpretation of that first war, whose battlefield was starry Heaven, and the first slaughterers—the Angels. As the matter now stands, however, one has to trace *Revelation*

event by event, to other and far older visions. For the better comprehension of the apocalyptic allegories and of the esoteric epos we ask the reader to turn to *Revelation*, and to read chapter XII from verse 1 to verse 7.

This has several meanings, and much has been found out with regard to the astronomical and numerical keys of this universal myth. That which may be now given, is a fragment, a few hints as to its secret meaning as embodying the record of a real war, the struggle between the initiates of the two schools. Many and various are the still existing allegories built on this same foundation stone. The true narrative—that which gives the full esoteric meaning—is in the Secret Books, but the writer has had no access to these,

In the exoteric works, however, the episode of the Taraka war, and some Esoteric commentaries, may offer a clue perhaps. In every *Purana* the event is described with more or less variations which show its allegorical character.

In the Mythology of the earliest Vaidic Aryans as in the later Pauranic narratives, mention is made of Budha, the "wise," one "learned in the Secret Wisdom," who is the planet Mercury in his euhemerization. The *Hindu Classical Dictionary* credits Budha with being the author of a hymn in the *Rig Veda*. Therefore, he can by no means be "a later fiction of the Brahmans," but is a very old personation indeed.

It is by enquiring into his genealogy, or theogony rather, that the following facts are disclosed. As a myth, he is the son of Tara, the wife of Brihaspati, the "gold-coloured," and of Soma, the (male) Moon who, Paris-like, carries this new Helen of the Hindu sidereal kingdom away from her husband. This causes a great strife and war in Svarga (Heaven). The episode brings on a battle between the Gods and the Asuras. King Soma finds allies in Usanas (Venus), the leader of the Danavas;

and the Gods are led by Indra and Rudra, who side with Brihaspati. The latter is helped by Sankara (Siva), who, having had for his Guru Brihaspati's father, Angiras, befriends his son. Indra is here the Indian prototype of Michael, the Archistrategus and the slayer of the "Dragon's" Angels—since one of his names is Jishnu, "leader of the celestial host." Both fight, as some Titans did against other Titans in defence of revengeful Gods, the one party in defence of Jupiter Tonans (in India, Brihaspati is the planet Jupiter, which is a curious coincidence); the other in support of the ever-thundering Rudra. During this war, Indra is deserted by his body-guard, the Storm-Gods (Maruts). The story is very suggestive in some of its details,

Let us examine some of them, and seek to discover their meaning.

The Presiding Genius, or "Regent" of the planet Jupiter is Brihaspati, the wronged husband. He is the Instructor or spiritual Guru of the Gods who are the representatives of the procreative powers. In the *Rig Veda*, he is called Brahmanaspati, the name "of a deity in whom the action of the worshipped upon the gods is personified." Hence Brahmanaspati represents the materialization of the "Divine Grace," so to say, by means of ritual and ceremonies, or the exoteric worship.

Tara, his wife, is on the other hand, the personification of the powers, of one initiated into Gupta Vidya (secret knowledge), as will be shown.

Soma is the Moon astronomically; but in mystical phraseology it is also the name of the sacred beverage drunk by the Brahmans and the Initiates during their mysteries and sacrificial rites. The Soma plant is the *Asclepias acida*, which yields a juice from which that mystic beverage, the Soma drink, is made. Alone the descendants of the Rishis,

the Agnihotris, or fire priests, of the great Mysteries knew all its powers. But the real property of the *true Soma* was (and is) to make a "new man" of the Initiate, after he is "reborn," namely once that he begins to live in his *astral* body; for, his spiritual nature overcoming the physical, he would soon snap it off and part even from that the realized form. [The partaker of Soma finds himself both linked to his external body, and yet away from it in his spiritual form. Freed from the former, he soars for the time being in the ethereal higher regions, becoming virtually "as one of the Gods," and yet preserving in his physical brain the memory of what he sees and learns. Plainly speaking, Soma is the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, forbidden by the jealous Elohim to Adam and Eve or Yah-ve, "lest man should become as one of us"].

Soma was never given in days of old to the non-initiated Brahman—the simple Grihasta, or priest of the exoteric ritual. Thus Brihaspati, "Guru of the Gods" though he was, still represented the dead-letter form of worship. It is Tara, his *wife*, the symbol of one who, though wedded to dogmatic worship, longs for true Wisdom who is shown as initiated into his mysteries by King Soma, the giver of that Wisdom. Soma is thus made to carry her away in the allegory. The result of this, is the birth of Budha, *Esoteric Wisdom*,—Mercury, or Hermes, in Greece and Egypt. He is represented as "so beautiful," that even the husband, though well aware that Budha is not the progeny of his dead-letter worship—claims the "new-born" as his son, the fruit of his ritualistic and meaningless forms. [We see the same in the modern exoteric religions]. Such is, in brief, *one* of the meanings of the allegory—*Ibid.* pp. 522-524.

END OF THE NOTE ON BALAKANDA.



